

CJR

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

ASSIGNMENT IRAQ

In the middle of 2003, not long after President Bush landed on the USS *Abraham Lincoln* in May to tell the world that “major combat operations in Iraq have ended,” Time Books came out with a glossy hardback titled *21 Days to Baghdad — The Inside Story of How America Won the War Against Iraq*. The book concludes with a shot of the president on the *Lincoln* in that snug flight suit. Although it includes one horrific shot of Ali Ismail Abbas, the twelve-year-old Baghdad boy who lost both arms and his family to a U.S. missile in March, the book is an oddly sanitized thing, the portrayal of a tidy and limited little war. The triumphant text tells us that the V-J Day moment in Iraq arrived “on April 9, when a U.S. team tied a chain to a statue of Saddam in Baghdad’s Paradise Square and, with a couple of hefty yanks, pulled it from its pedestal.”

The book is a time capsule in a way and, though it is not a very old one, it has a whiff of rot. It is an embarrassment, but it’s also a useful reminder of how reportorial curiosity can surrender to patriotic stagecraft, and in turn, how such stagecraft can shield policy from inquiry at critical moments. The book feels both innocent and cynical.

For this special forty-fifth anniversary issue of the *Columbia Journalism Review* we have constructed a different kind of history of the war, an oral history told through the voices of many of the journalists who have covered it. We interviewed forty-five reporters, photographers, translators, and stringers, and gathered war photos, too, many of them previously unpublished in the U.S.



Our starting point is the fall of Baghdad, and the reader will see that even before Saddam’s statue hit the ground journalists were picking up signals that America’s time in Iraq would be complex, confusing, and worse.

The oral history starts on page fourteen. It has several interlaced story lines. One is a record of how western journalists woke up to the

growing chasms in Iraq between Americans and Iraqis, between soldiers and civilians, between the Green Zone and the rest of the country, and to the rifts among Iraqis themselves. The history is also an account of the impediments — practical, political, professional — that journalists have faced while covering Iraq, and how they have overcome those impediments or failed to do so.

As we read transcripts of our interviews another story line emerged: how individual journalists began to appreciate the deep danger they were in as the occupation wore on and the insurgency took hold, and how they dealt with it. You can’t read this history without admiring the skill and guts that these journalists bring to the job, their stubborn effort to get the story right despite the obstacles. Or without appreciating the fact that the coverage of the war and the course of the war are somehow intertwined.

We were also struck here at *CJR* by the passion and expertise of these particular voices — and also by the fact that the conventions and traditions of journalism sometimes muffle this power and passion in their work. Many of these people have been in Iraq longer than some of our soldiers and diplomats. We need to hear them. They know things. **CJR**

A man pastes up a campaign poster in an ethnically mixed Baghdad neighborhood in January 2006

CHRIS HONDIROS/GETTY IMAGES

CJR

CONTENTS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006

"To assess the performance of journalism . . . to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession, and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent."

— From the founding editorial, 1961

ARTICLES

THE DEATH OF SUPPLY COLUMN 21 A lesson from the Vietnam War on the press, the military, and authority. By David Halberstam **10**

INTO THE ABYSS Reporting Iraq, 2003-2006: An Oral History **14**



A dust storm sweeps over Sykes, a U.S. base near Tal Afar, June 5, 2005

COMMENTARY

FROM THE EDITORS In Iraq, what the journalists know **1**

IDEAS & REVIEWS

ESSAY Fear of Yoga. Today, everybody, including the press, loves the Hindu practice of health and spirituality. But it took a couple of centuries to get there. By Robert Love. **80**

REVIEW *The Race Beat: the Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* **91**
by Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff. Reviewed by David K. Shipler

RESEARCH REPORT A new take on news and late-night comedy, and a parsing of journalistic courage. By Michael Schudson and Tony Dokoupil **96**

DEPARTMENTS

LETTERS 4 **DARTS & LAURELS 8** **THE LOWER CASE** INSIDE BACK COVER

COVER: CHRISTOPH BANGERT

"If there is good news, you cannot hear it with the noise of the explosions and the noise of the terrorists and the noise of the American military operations. There's no good news at all."

— Yousif Mohamed Basil, p. 14

ANNOUNCING

THE 2006 WINNERS OF THE \$10,000 IN CHARACTER PRIZE FOR EDITORIAL AND OPINION WRITING ABOUT THE HUMAN VIRTUES

In Character, a journal of everyday virtues, published by the John Templeton Foundation, is pleased to announce the winners of the 2006 *In Character* Prize, for work published in 2005:

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Associate Professor of Leadership Studies and Religion and Director of the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement, University of Richmond
and

JONATHAN B. WIGHT

Associate Professor of Economics and International Studies,
Robins School of Business, University of Richmond
For their op-ed

"Disaster Relief: What Would Adam Smith Do?"

Published in *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 18, 2005

HONORABLE MENTION WINNERS RECEIVE \$5,000 EACH:

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Editor, *Deseret Morning News* editorial page, Salt Lake City, Utah for
"Forgiveness has power to change future," *Deseret Morning News*, August 21, 2005

STACEY T. WARDE

Editor of the monthly literary journal *The Rogue Voice*, for "A Homeless Woman's Gift,"
published in *The Tribune*, San Luis Obispo, California, July 18, 2005

The *In Character* Prize recognizes the editorial treatment of the ordinary human virtues and their importance in the life of our society and country. The Prize honors writing about any of the commonly recognized human virtues—such as courage, generosity, humility, honesty, tenacity, modesty, and the like. The judges looked for unique, unusual or profound insight into the role played by these human virtues. The Prize is a continuation of the mission of *In Character* itself as it illuminates the nature and power of the everyday virtues and how they shape our vision of the good life.

The judges for the Prize are the editors of *In Character*, joined by: Professor Thomas Goldstein, Professor and Program Director of Mass Communications, University of California, Berkeley; Christine Rosen, former editor of *In Character*, Fellow at the Ethics & Public Policy Center, Washington, DC; Professor Alan Wolfe, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, Boston College.

In Character is supported by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation.



LETTERS

ELECTION BLUES

Thanks for your editorial "Guarding the Vote: The Press and the Lessons of Ohio" (CJR, September/October). But I'm afraid the criticism of the mainstream media regarding the 2004 election should be even harsher than the editorial allows.

Most important, there would have been virtually no coverage at all of what happened here had it not been for the Internet. Your editorial refers to the "loony left." But it fails to face the reality that without the network of independent Web sites that carried and re-carried the investigative pieces that have appeared at *freepress.org*, *motherjones.com*, *blackboxvoting.com*, *bradblogger*, and a few other investigative sites, barely a hint of this epic attack on American democracy would have seen the light of day.

In fact, there has been a huge hunger for this coverage that the mainstream media have totally missed. *Motherjones.com* carried our first warning of what was about to happen here in March 2004. When we published "Twelve Ways Bush Is Now Stealing the Ohio Vote" at *freepress.org* on October 27, a week before the elections, our visits jumped from about 3,000 a day to more than 50,000, with Internet re-sends almost certainly pushing the story's circulation well into the hundreds of thousands, at a time when not a single daily newspaper or electronic media outlet would touch the issue except with scorn.

When Kerry conceded, his margin of defeat was allegedly the 136,000-vote figure your article mentioned. After certification, it dropped to the currently official 118,775. Thus, even the high-



ly partisan secretary of state, J. Kenneth Blackwell, who also served as Ohio's Bush-Cheney co-chair, was forced to concede that his initial vote included 17,000 ballots wrongly attributed to Bush. Since then, we have found far, far more.

Indeed, independent studies of just some 50,000 ballots (some 5.6 million votes were cast in Ohio in 2004) have revealed an astounding smorgasbord of obvious theft and fraud. Most recently, we have found precincts where 359 consecutive votes were allegedly cast for Bush; where thirty-six straight replacement ballots were used for no apparent reason; where tape was placed over Kerry votes; where tabulations were switched from precinct to precinct, totally skewing the vote count; and much, much more. But none of this has appeared in the major media, even as the indictments — and convictions — of those connected with this tainted election start to roll in.

We have now won a federal court battle preserving the Ohio ballots, at least for the duration of a civil rights suit meant to right some of the wrongs that were perpetrated here in 2004.

We hope the media will finally do their job and dig into this iceberg of evidence, whose barest tip so obviously indicates a cynically stolen election.

Bob Fittrakis
Harvey Wasserman
Columbus Institute for
Contemporary Journalism
Columbus, Ohio

Bob Fittrakis and Harvey Wasserman are publisher and senior editor of www.freepress.org, and co-authors, with Steve Rosenfeld, of What Happened in Ohio, recently published by the New Press. Fittrakis is of counsel and Wasserman is a plaintiff in the King Lincoln lawsuit, which has preserved the Ohio 2004 ballots.

Your editorial was published just a touch over a month before our next national election. The decline of democracy has grown exponentially worse across the entire nation, every single day since 2004's atrociously administered presidential election. I have been exhaustively reporting these matters — in relative obscurity — every day at *The Brad Blog* (www.BradBlog.com) since 3 a.m. or so of November 3, 2004. And yet, CJR has waited until now for its gentle hand-wringing over the lack of coverage on these matters in the national mainstream media.

Your editorial goes so far as to describe *The New York Times* as "typically strong on voting controversy" before softly suggesting they haven't done enough to cover these matters. Never mind that it was the *Times* that, perhaps single-handedly, instructed the nation that nothing at all went wrong in Ohio when on November 21, 2004, they characterized the efforts of those of us trying to investigate what hap-

pened on Election Day as little more than "the conspiracy theories of leftwing bloggers."

In the meantime, nothing has been found to suggest that those of us leftwing blogging conspiracy theorists were anything but absolutely right in our concern, diligence, and attention to the matter.

One investigation after another, one scientific report after another, have all revealed that what went on in Ohio was a travesty, but that the worst is yet to come now that unaccountable, inaccurate, untested, hackable new electronic voting systems will be littering 80 percent of our electoral landscape this November 7.

Hopefully we'll hear from you again on these matters. But please make it well before September of 2008 — while there is still time to actually hope that the national media can have a positive effect in watchdogging on behalf of our virtually hobbled democracy.

Brad Friedman
Editor-in-chief, *The Brad Blog*
Los Angeles, California

Remarkable that, in surveying the response of the media to Robert F. Kennedy's *Rolling Stone* piece about Ohio's role in the 2004 election, CJR looked only at national outlets, not Ohio's. What are we, chopped liver?

The *Dayton Daily News* editorial page (which had endorsed John Kerry) took up those aspects of the Kennedy piece that related to western Ohio, which were substantial. For example, because a black, little-known candidate for the state supreme court who supported gay marriage did much better than Kerry in some Republican counties, Kennedy was convinced that somebody was stealing Kerry votes; in fact, however, ju-

dicial candidates aren't identified by party on the ballot. That's the simple explanation. If that candidate — in that very low-profile race — had been identified, she would have run behind Kerry.

And: In half these counties, Bush got more votes than the proposed ban on gay marriage, which even attracted some Kerry people. How could *that* be, Kennedy asked? Answer: More people voted in the presidential race than on the ballot issue. Duh! (More people also voted for Kerry than voted against the ban.)

You highlight Secretary of State Ken Blackwell's alleged attempts to stifle turnout, failing to note that, in a state that is not growing, turnout increased by an amazing million voters from 2000 to 2004. How much higher do you imagine it might have gone?

In truth, the Republicans were as frantic in their efforts to *increase* turnout as the Democrats. After the election, their victory was widely attributed to their effort to do just that, especially among evangelicals.

In buying into the easy demonization of Blackwell, you fail to mention that he sided with pro-turnout forces on some controversies, that he kept Ralph Nader off the ballot (to the distress of the Republicans), or that he quickly rescinded his order about not using registrations on too-light paper. (Even Kennedy granted that last point.)

Kennedy begins his piece with a long dissertation on how the exit polls *couldn't* have been so wrong. (Gimme a break.) That is an implicit charge against the actual Election Day administration of the elections (as opposed to preelection registration controversies). Well, Election Day ad-

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ministration is handled by county elections boards, all of which have equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans.

Ohio newspapers did not deploy squads of reporters to deal with Kennedy's claims, because this was all old, stale stuff, and the papers were not going to have their chains yanked by some politician.

The people who complain that the media haven't jumped on the Kennedy bandwagon often suggest there are some truths that are just too awful for the media to face. Nuts. How about the truth that the pseudo-journalism of political warriors is often just garbage. One might expect CJR to have some concern about that.

Martin Gottlieb
Editorial page, *Dayton Daily News*
Dayton, Ohio

UNCONVENTIONAL NEWS

Eric Umansky's article on the U.S. media's coverage of American torture ("Failures of Imagination," CJR, September/October) raises a number of important, and troubling, issues. However, I must point out an omission.

Jane's Defence Weekly, although published in the U.K., is widely read in Washington and ran two articles that, early on, questioned the U.S. administration's view of the Geneva Conventions. "Legal Issues Cloud Afghan Detentions" was published in the issue dated 2 January 2002, and "Detainees' Pose Problem of Classification for USA" ran in the issue dated January 16, 2002.

I wrote both stories from Bangkok, with the research largely done in November/December 2001. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was most helpful in this regard, but the U.S. Department of Defense never responded to my queries.

It appeared at the time that Washington's perspective on the Geneva Conventions was largely driven by the greater flexibility this would allow in prisoner interrogations.

This was suggested by several clear infringements of the Third Geneva Convention, including the detention of high-value prisoners on board the amphibious assault ship USS *Bataan* in violation of Article 22, and the ICRC's lack of access to prisoners. The legal basis for a number of detentions in Pakistan was also questioned, my inquiries directed to Inter-Services Intelligence having been ignored.

Robert Karniol
Asia/Pacific bureau chief
Jane's Defence Weekly
Bangkok, Thailand

POWER FAILURE?

The headline on your editorial "False Fronts: Why to Look Behind the Label" (CJR, July/August) irresponsibly twisted the facts surrounding the formation of the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition.

From the outset, the Nuclear Energy Institute informed journalists interested in the coalition that co-chairs Patrick Moore and Christine Todd Whitman would be compensated financially for their time and expertise. The fact that CJR finds something devious in this transparency — hence the headline "False Fronts" — makes one question the true motivation behind the editorial. Certainly there has been nothing "false" behind the formation or the positioning of the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition and its co-chairs.

If CJR's editors don't like what they read on the label, that's certainly their right. But those views don't give them license to concoct irregularities where they don't exist.

Scott Peterson
Vice president, Nuclear Energy Institute
Washington, D.C.

Your editorial criticizes journalists for failing to refer to the group's funding by a nuclear power industry association (which my agency represents), and makes a highly critical effort to discredit the coalition's co-chairs, former New Jersey Governor and EPA Administrator Christine

Todd Whitman and Greenpeace founder Dr. Patrick Moore.

But if CJR's issue is with press coverage, then why the hatchet job on Whitman and Moore? They each, through their independent consultancies, have the power to pick and choose their causes, and each has been completely transparent about funding sources and relationships with the Nuclear Energy Institute and the public relations firm of Hill & Knowlton. And with CASEnergy's funding fully disclosed on media materials and during a high-profile press launch at the National Press Club earlier this year, CJR's insinuation that the coalition is somehow "working the press" rings hollow.

As a media watchdog, wouldn't a more constructive role for CJR be to present a discussion of the group's newsworthiness? Whitman and Moore, each reasonably "green," are leading more than 350 organizations and individuals from across the political spectrum to support the increased use of nuclear energy, at a time when the country's politicians and their constituents are clamoring for clean, affordable energy. Sure sounds newsworthy to me.

But what CJR seems to require of journalists is not just news judgment, but a reflection of CJR's own attitudes about nuclear energy and its properties.

If the editors' real beef is with nuclear power or its viability as an energy source, then why not a full airing of your concerns, instead of an exercise in shooting the messenger?

Frank Mankiewicz
Vice chairman
Hill & Knowlton
Washington, D.C.

The editors respond: As our editorial stated, "We have no position on nuclear power." We do, however, have a firm position on disclosing political agendas and financial ties: we believe that to be fair, such disclosures must be full. Our criticism, therefore, was directed not at the industry or its representatives, who after all were only doing their jobs, but, rather, at the news media, who were not doing theirs.

Some reporters cover

- City hall

Science journalists cover

- Bioterrorism
- Misuse of science in public policy
- Biotechnology and tissue engineering
- Brain and cognitive sciences
- Avian flu
- Privacy in the computer age
- Stem cells and cloning
- Weapons of mass destruction
- Nanotechnology
- Space exploration
- HIV and AIDS
- Dubious practices in drug marketing
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— Justin Gillis
The Washington Post

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DARTS & LAURELS



DART to the *Palo Alto Daily News*, for blindly toeing the local line. "Everybody," as was noted on Slate's August 11 roundup of Today's Papers, "leads with the big, foiled terror plot in which twenty-four British men, mostly of Pakistani descent, were arrested and are suspected of plotting to bomb multiple airliners with liquid explosives." Everybody, that is, but the *Palo Alto Daily News*, whose policy keeps its front page bound to strictly local news, hand and foot. There the lead story on August 11 was not the terrorist plot — which did eventually show up on the paper's page eleven — but rather on some proposed new rules to strengthen the sanitary standards for pedicures.

DART to the *Vineyard Gazette*, for stealing the fruit of a neighbor's vine. On August 1, *The Martha's Vineyard Times*, the rival weekly that also serves the Massachusetts island, prepared under the byline of its news editor, Nelson Sigelman, a richly flavored, full-bodied obituary of a modest local fisherman, a copy of which it sent to the funeral home, as is routine. The obituary itself, however, was far from routine: as the enterprising Sigelman discovered, the popular fisherman had earlier spent some thirty-eight years as a Secret Service agent whose feats included heroically protecting President Gerald Ford during an assassination attempt. On August 2, the *Gazette*, having been (routinely) sent a copy of the obituary by the funeral home, e-mailed the *Times* about its intention to use the "lovely obituary" with only minor changes but without a byline. In an e-mailed reply on August 3 — the

day the *Times* published its "lovely" piece — the *Times* graciously waived the byline but noted, explicitly, the need for proper credit to the *Times*. On August 4, the *Times*'s obituary appeared in the *Gazette* bearing no label whatsoever as to its vintage. Complaints by the *Times* to the *Gazette* about the omission yielded a bunch of surprising responses — among them, a statement that the absence of attribution in an outsider's work was "a matter of policy" and a claim that the running by two newspapers of the same obituary "happens all the time." All of which, in their disingenuous variety, were decidedly off.

LAUREL to Cox Newspapers, for unearthing still more of the buried shame in America's racial past. We knew about the lynchings and the bombings; what we didn't know about was the expulsions. Now, in his exhaustive four-part series "Leave or Die," Washington editor Elliot Jaspin shows in painstaking, painful detail how, for decades after the Civil War and particularly in the South, terrorized blacks were systematically driven from their homes and run out of town, abandoning their (soon-to-be-appropriated) land and property, by whites hell-bent on keeping their communities pure. The result of a mission begun in 1998 when Jaspin happened upon an all-white county in Arkansas, the series draws on newspaper archives, census data, tax records, and interviews with surviving descendants to document, county by county, even lot by lot, this nation's experiment in ethnic cleansing.

Darts & Laurels is written by Gloria Cooper, CJR's deputy executive editor, to whom nominations should be addressed: 212-854-1887; gc15@columbia.edu.

DART to The Associated Press, for a delayed reaction due to impaired judgment. When the American Medical Association released the heady findings of a survey that showed an appalling degree of excessive drinking and promiscuous sexual behavior on the part of an astonishing number of college women during their spring break, the AP could not resist, characterizing the survey as "all but confirming what goes on in those 'Girls Gone Wild' videos." Nor could countless outlets the AP serves, from the morning news shows and the daily newspapers to the cable newscasts and those on the Web, most of which flashed and splashed the damned — and damning — statistics with an unmistakable leer. The morning after, however, soon arrived. First came a devastating analysis of the survey's grossly unscientific methods and deceptive claims — an analysis published on the Mystery Pollster blog and emphatically reinforced by the president of the American Association for Public Opinion Research; then came the AMA's admission that the study had in fact been a "media advocacy tool." For its part, though, the AP seemed reluctant to lose the buzz. Indeed, in an e-mail to the AP pressing for a correction, Frank Coleman, senior vice president for the Distilled Spirits Council, took strong exception to what he said had been the AP's first response — namely, that "a correction would only spread the story further." As it turned out, however, the AP did eventually take the needed step toward the recovery of accuracy — right after Coleman sent the AP a copy of a Howard Kurtz column in *The Washington Post* that poured light on the media's sordid binge. Cheers!

The Livingston Awards

For Young Journalists

Three \$10,000 Prizes are given each year by the Mollie Parnis Livingston Foundation for the best print or broadcast coverage of local, national and international news by journalists aged 34 and younger in any U.S. medium. The Livingstons, whose purpose is to recognize and further develop the abilities of young journalists, are the largest all-media, general reporting prizes in the country. Miss Parnis established the awards in 1980 through her foundation, now chaired by Neal S. Hochman.



Deadline for 2006 entries: February 1, 2007

Judging Panel

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Friedman, Madeleine Albright, Jay Harris, Kevin Klose, Peter Osnos, Michael Connelly, Jon Entire, Ann Marie Lipinski, David Granger, Nick Lemann, Bob Mankoff and Paul Tash.

Spouses are an integral part of the Fellowship experience and are invited to participate actively. They often end their year with a book in the works or a new career on the horizon. Housing is easy and the public schools are very good.

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A LESSON FROM THE VIETNAM WAR ON THE PRESS, THE MILITARY, AND AUTHORITY

THE DEATH OF SUPPLY COLUMN 21

BY DAVID HALBERSTAM

The Associated Press bureau that operated out of Saigon starting in mid-1965 was a great one — a place of legends, a bureau created by arguably the most underrated editor of that era. Wes Gallagher was new at his job as general manager of the AP, and determined from the start to show that this story and this war, whether his constituent papers liked it or not, and whether the news was good or not, was a very important one. All three of the bureau members, Malcolm Browne, Peter Arnett, and Horst Faas, would go on to win the Pulitzer Prize, Browne in 1964, Faas in 1965 (the first of two), and Arnett in 1966.

They were very good, the men and in time the women of the AP bureau. Like the other reporters in Saigon in those days, they lived the life of the obsessed. No one had a personal life. No one ever took a day off. Vietnam was a great crucible for anyone who wanted to become a serious journalist, not just because it was dangerous and you had to calibrate the value of every operation you went on, but because of the immense political pressures involved. Washington had invested so much in the *appearance*

of the war that you were always under scrutiny. Since the war did not work, not from the beginning, any story that was important, and that had any significant dimension of truth, was bound to draw the anger of both Saigon and Washington. That meant any reporter working in Vietnam knew it was important to have your facts beyond dispute every time you filed.

For the ten years he was in Vietnam no one drew more anger than Arnett. He seemed to be a lightning rod for the Johnson administration, in part because he was so good and in part because he was from New Zealand; the White House was filled with young men and women studying his stories, looking for mistakes. "Peter, you're a great reporter," Gallagher told him as they were leaving the luncheon where Arnett had been awarded the Pulitzer, "but don't be wrong on a story — there are too many people out there just itching to get you."

Arnett had seemed like something of a journalistic hitchhiker in the beginning, taking whatever job was available. He started out running a small English-language newspaper in Laos in 1960, and first got the AP's attention during one of those inevitable Laotian coups that brought down all communications for a couple of weeks. With all the news agencies cut off from the news on the Thai side of the river, Arnett

A wounded marine is dragged to an evacuation helicopter after the ambush of Supply Column 21 on August 19, 1965

had swum the Mekong, carrying his and other reporters' stories in a plastic bag so they wouldn't get wet, and filed them from a post office on the other side. It was a swim, as much as anything else, to a better job, and in time the AP offered him one.

Arnett met Faas when both men were on assignment for the AP in Laos in 1962. Faas, who had worked previously for the AP in the Congo, thought Arnett had a certain cockiness he had seen before — quick and brave and boisterous. "There was a lot of Fleet Street in Peter when we first met, and I could see him getting an offer from one of the British papers and ending up there." But as Faas said, Arnett kept getting better and better, wanting to know why things were happening and why the war was not being won; in addition, he had an almost pure instinct for combat reporting — like a man with his own personal radar that told him when and where to go. He had two kinds of courage, the courage to go into battle again and again, and the rarer kind of courage to report stories that the American mission and Washington hated because they went against the official optimism.

The AP reporters who had been there when the first American combat troops arrived had, like a handful of other colleagues from the earlier days, a distinct advantage in covering the war. They had more sources, of course, but they were more rooted as well. By rooted I mean that because they had gotten there long before it was an American war, they tended to see it more through the prism of Vietnamese history, not American history. Unlike many reporters who arrived with the big American buildup, they did not see it as connected to how well we had done in World War II; rather, they saw it more through the legacy of the French Indo-China War. They understood that the flaws of the South were political, bound up in Vietnam's modern history and in the colonial war from which this current post-colonial war was so derivative. Thus, even as the war was Americanized, they possessed a certain skepticism that many of their more newly arrived journalistic colleagues lacked. They understood that you could have, in the technical sense, a series of victories, but that because the other side had absolute political superiority, the ability to recruit eager young men and to keep coming, they might not really be victories at all.

Perhaps Arnett's most symbolic clash with the American military authorities came right after the first American combat units arrived in country, three years after he first got there. In mid-August 1965, at the very start of the American war, the Marines received intelligence of the presence of a Vietcong

regiment in the village of Van Tuong near the Marine base at Chu Lai, all of this just south of Danang. The Marines decided to attack, even though their own forces were still in the process of building up.

The entire operation was kept secret — there was to be no coverage, even though it was the first major use of the Marines in Vietnam. Lieutenant General Lew Walt, the Marine commander in Vietnam, went on a very public inspection tour of Marine outposts to the north, taking most of the Danang press corps with him; clearly the Marines wanted coverage *after* the battle. The ground fighting in the Van Tuong operation, known as Operation Starlite, turned out to be very fierce. Probably, though there is no empirical proof of this, the Vietcong had decided to test the new American military machine, trying to find out both its strengths and

These reporters saw the war through the prism of Vietnamese history, not American history.

weaknesses. Instead of breaking contact as they often did in the face of superior western firepower, they held their ground and fought hard. There were heavy casualties on both sides.

Arnett had watched the arrival of major American units in mid-1965 with a sinking feeling. He was very wary of what American technology might do and, equally important, might not do. To win, he thought, the Americans would not merely have to fight the Vietnamese, they would have to *become* Vietnamese, and that was not likely to happen.

In mid-August, he heard about a major battle going on just south of Danang near Chu Lai and got himself on a space-available flight up to Danang, where he found an old friend who got him on an Army supply helicopter to Chu Lai. At Chu Lai he climbed aboard a Marine chopper about to bring fuel oil to the embattled Marines. But on their way to the main fighting in Operation Starlite, Arnett's chopper pilot spotted a group of American armored vehicles stranded in a rice paddy. At that moment no one knew anything about Supply Column 21, which had been assigned to leave one of the ships just offshore and bring badly needed food and ammo to the embattled Marines of Starlite.

Supply Column 21 was already in danger of being wiped out. It had been ambushed in the night by the Vietcong, and the survivors feared that a renewed assault was imminent. When Arnett's pilot spotted it, five of its seven vehicles had already been immobilized. The lost column had included two M-48 tanks and five Amtracks (heavy amphibious vehicles). The Vietcong had immediately

knocked out one of the tanks and destroyed one of the Amtracks. Three of the remaining Amtracks had bogged down in the paddy, a perfect target.

By the time the chopper arrived, only one Amtrack was intact, around which the surviving wounded had gathered. As it landed, the chopper was immediately surrounded by wounded men screaming to get out of there; Arnett and a photographer named Tim Page, who had also hitched aboard, helped the crew members load the wounded onto the chopper. In those days you could not yet print casualty figures, but Arnett later estimated there were probably about twenty-seven men in the column at the start, that at least

There was a certain irony to the attempt of American officers to lecture men like Arnett who had been in country so long.

five had been killed, eight more seriously wounded, and about ten others more lightly wounded. Arnett flew back to Saigon where he filed his story — the Death of Supply Column 21.

To Arnett it was not just a one-day story — a serious firefight, with higher casualties than anyone had expected, a tragedy caused by bad communications in a brand new war. To him it confirmed a feeling he already had: that Vietnam was something of a quagmire, that a great deal of the technology that America was going to depend on in this country would be inapplicable and might turn out to be burdensome. In his story there are several prescient references to the sheer might and weight of the armored column, 287 tons of steel, and of how incredibly vulnerable it had proven — “a reminder too that armored vehicles have a limited use in Vietnam,” he wrote.

The next day the Marines denied the story. To them, Supply Column 21 did not exist. They were pushing the main operation, Operation Starlite, as a success, the first big engagement of the war, for the Vietcong had finally fled, the Americans had taken the objective, and the casualty rate was presumed to be roughly ten to one. They wanted no mention of Supply Column 21, for it would have tainted the larger story — that American military power was going to work.

But there was a problem for anyone denying Arnett's story — he had a bunch of photos. Among those pushing the idea that the story was wrong was General Wallace Greene, the Marine commandant. Gallagher invited General Greene to a publisher's meeting. There he did a slide show with Arnett's photos from the battle. “General,” Gallagher said, “you said this didn't happen.”

“I was misinformed,” Greene said.

As time went on there was a certain irony to the attempt of some American officers — newly arrived in country and warned back in America about the evils of the press corps and how unpatriotic it was — to lecture men like Arnett who had been there for so long. In the early years, 1962 to 1964, it was one thing, but later it became a joke, an American officer telling Arnett what was wrong with the press and why we were winning, and Arnett asking how long he had been in country and the officer saying three months or five months and Peter answering that he had been in country for five years or six years or seven years. More than any other journalist, Arnett became the possessor of the institutional memory of the American war. He had been there at the start and he was there at the end. It was Arnett, on that final day in April 1975, who wrote one of the last dispatches as Saigon fell. He was, in the unofficial judgment of his peers, the best combat reporter of the war.

Those reporters were not particularly well paid; print journalism has never paid well and the wire services are not known for huge paychecks. The rewards are in the doing. For those who cover this kind of history in the making, there is a certain kind of honor — one rarely expressed — in the willingness to go back day after day and take risks for what are, in the traditional sense of material benefits, negligible rewards. It is in some way about winning and holding the respect of your colleagues, and of your own respect for the men and women who are fighting the war. There is a camaraderie that comes from shared values and shared obligations; being a reporter is at the very core of a democracy, of being a free person in a free society.

Even as I write there are in some parts of the world young men and women going out every day, and doing something difficult and complicated, something that takes a surprisingly varied array of talents — the ability to write quickly, a rare, almost intuitive sense of politics, and of course a certain kind of courage, the courage to stand up to powerful people who are always trying to bend you and intimidate you. When I was a young man in Saigon I was privileged enough to witness such work and to see a great institution at its best, at a moment in a democracy when it mattered. ■

David Halberstam shared the Pulitzer for International Reporting (with Malcolm Browne) in 1964 for their work in Vietnam. His twenty-first book, The Coldest Winter, about the Korean War, will be published next September by Hyperion. This piece is adapted from his foreword to Breaking News: How the Associated Press Has Covered War, Peace, and Everything Else, to be published next summer.

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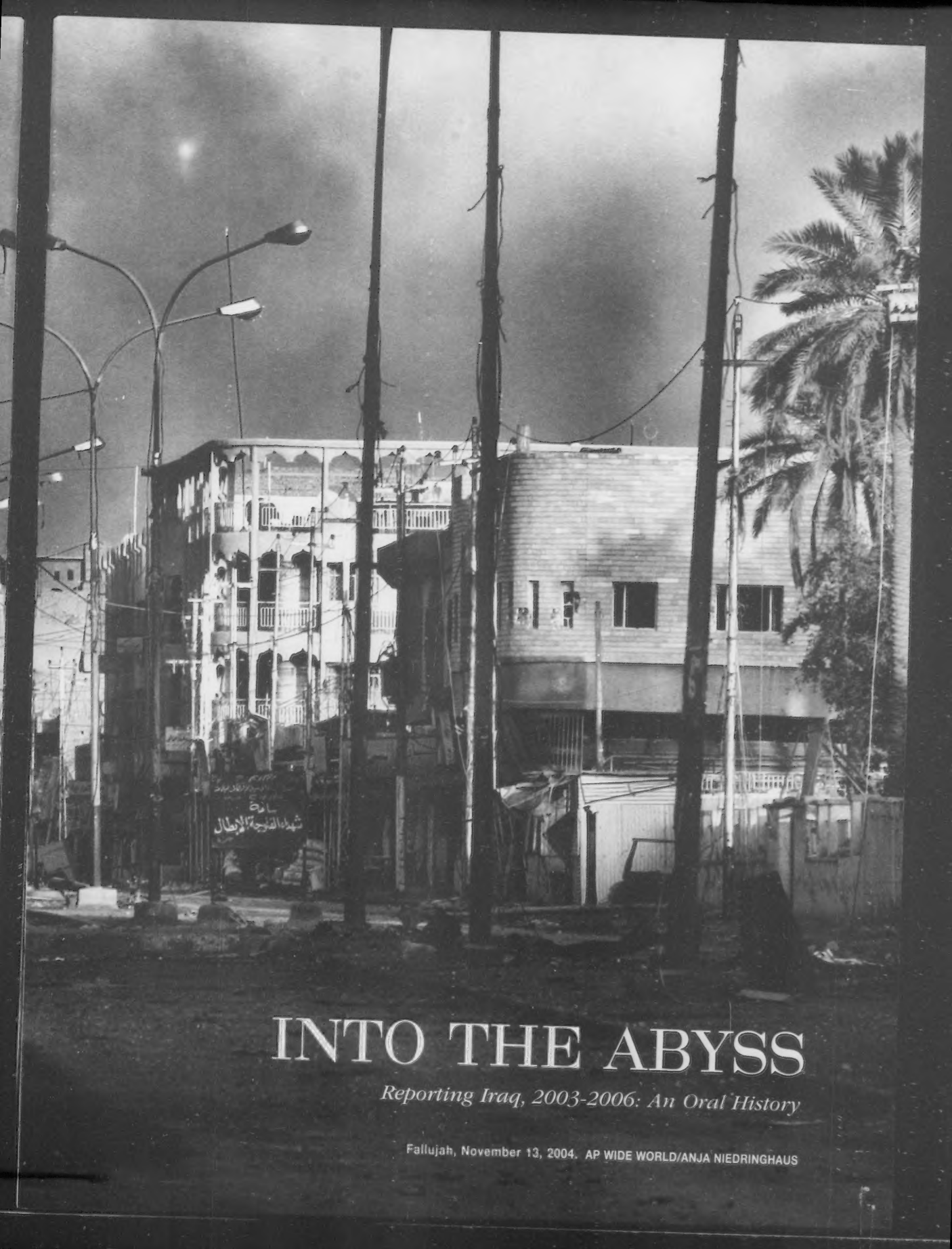
The fellowship seeks to promote a deeper understanding and a more informed public discussion of the interface of science and religion. Potential areas of study include comparison of the methods of science and religion, neuroscience, cosmology, quantum uncertainty, and spirituality and health.

Applicants must demonstrate an interest in the field, originality of thought displayed in previous writings, and a superior record of journalistic achievement. The awards are open to journalists with a minimum of three years' experience, though priority will be given to mid-career and senior journalists. The fellowship program is looking for journalists who show promise of making a significant contribution to the public's understanding of the complex issues in the field.

The application deadline is Friday, December 8, 2006.

For more information, or to apply for the fellowships, go to the website www.templeton-cambridge.org





INTO THE ABYSS

Reporting Iraq, 2003-2006: An Oral History

Fallujah, November 13, 2004. AP WIDE WORLD/ANJA NIEDRINGHAUS

WAR IN IRAQ: SOME KEY



2003 3/19 U.S.-led coalition invades Iraq 4/9 Staged toppling of Saddam Hussein statue in Firdos Square 4/21 speech 5/6 Paul Bremer appointed CPA administrator 5/23 Iraqi army disbanded 7/13 Iraqi Government 8/19 UN offices bombed, killing UN envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello and twenty-one others; UN begins to remove staff from Iraq 8/29 10/27 First day of Ramadan: suicide attacks kill more than thirty-four and wound hundreds at Red Cross HQ and four Baghdad police stations

2004 1/28 David Kay, former head of Iraq Survey Group, testifies before Senate Armed Services Committee that he found bombings of the offices of the main Kurdish political parties in Irbil kill at least a hundred Kurds 3/1 IGC agreed that more than a hundred people. U.S. officials blame Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who they claim has links to al-Qaeda 3/31 Four U.S. contractors killed 4/4 Shia uprisings in several cities after the arrest of an aide to Moqtada al-Sadr and the closure of al-Sadr's newspaper. An arrest warrant for al-Sadr leads to attacks aimed at police buildings in Basra leave at least sixty-eight dead 4/28 Images of torture at Abu Ghraib appear worldwide 4/29 U.S. troops enter the Green Zone 5/21 Spanish troops withdraw from Iraq 5/26 *New York Times* admits that its coverage of the administration's claim that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction was misleading 6/28 Bremer transfers sovereignty to Iraq. CPA dissolved, Allawi and his cabinet sworn in 7/7 Allawi signs a law allowing for martial law to save life of Filipino hostage 8/7 Allawi government orders the closure of the Baghdad office of Al-Jazeera 8/18 One hundred Iraqis killed after three weeks of fighting U.S. forces. The truce is brokered by Shia leader Ayatollah Ali Sistani 10/6 CIA report, authored by Charles L. Glaser, says Iraq has no WMDs 10/24 Forty-nine unarmed Iraqi Army recruits are ambushed and executed 11/2 Bush reelected 11/7 U.S. troops launch offensive to control Fallujah and have killed 1,200 insurgents 12/21 Fourteen U.S. soldiers killed by suicide bombing at a U.S. military base in Mosul

2005 1/12 WMD search is declared over by U.S. inspectors 1/30 Iraqis vote in first multiparty elections 4/7 Kurds win 49% of vote 5/1 U.S. troops withdraw from Baghdad 5/23 Downing Street memo of 7/23/02: "intelligence and facts being fixed around the policy" 5/30 Vice President Cheney says Iraqis are "not ready for democracy" 6/30 U.S. troops withdraw from Baghdad 8/28 Iraqi Sunnis reject constitution 8/31 Panic spreads over rumors of suicide bombers at a march of Shia faithful during the 2005 strikes near Ramadi kill seventy people. U.S. says the dead are militants; local eyewitnesses say most are civilians 10/30 In an official report, the U.S. says it has no evidence that Iraq had WMDs September 16, 2005 11/17 Rep. John Murtha calls for U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq 11/22 *Daily Mirror* publishes a memo revealing that Bush said to have talked Bush out of it 12/15 Election for a four-year Iraqi government

2006 2/22 Two men bomb the al-Askari shrine in Samarra, one of the holiest Shia religious sites. The bombing sparks a sectarian conflict that lasts until the previous November 3/30 After eighty-two days of captivity, journalist Jill Carroll freed by kidnappers 4/21 U.S. troops withdraw from Baghdad 6/7 Abu Musab al-Zarqawi killed in a U.S. air raid 6/20 Mutilated bodies of two U.S. soldiers found in Iraq 8/3 Head of U.S. Central Command, General John Abizaid, suggests civil war is possible in Iraq 8/16 *New York Times* reports that more Iraqis died in violence in July and August than in the previous two months (May/June: 5,818; July: 3,590; August: 3,009) 9/21 Italian Foreign Minister Massimo D'Alema says that the National Intelligence Estimate on "Trends in Global Terrorism," which states that "the Iraq conflict has become the 'cause célèbre' for jihadist recruitment"



Y E V E N T S



NAJAF, APRIL 19, 2003. REUTERS/YANNIS BEHRAKIS/LANDOV, SEE PAGE 22

U.S. establishes Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) as transitional government **5/1** President Bush's "Mission Accomplished" speech
 Council (IGC), composed of twenty-five Iraqi nationals chosen by U.S.-led coalition, meets to begin drafting new constitution
 A car bomb in Najaf kills Shia leader Ayatollah Mohammed Baqr al-Hakim and scores of others near the Tomb of Ali, a Shia shrine
 ations **12/14** Saddam Hussein captured near Tikrit
 and no evidence that Iraq had stockpiled unconventional weapons before U.S.-led invasion **2/1** During Eid celebrations, suicide
 es on a temporary constitution, which recognizes Islamic law as a source of legislation **3/2** Attacks across Iraq on Ashura kill more
 ors killed in Fallujah. Their mutilated bodies are hung from a bridge with a sign stating "Fallujah is the cemetery for Americans"
 ant for al-Sadr is issued **4/5** U.S. forces surround Fallujah at the start of an operation to pacify insurgents **4/21** Four suicide
30 U.S. troops pull back from Fallujah **5/17** President of IGC, Ezzedine Salim, is killed by suicide bomber at a checkpoint outside
 ms about Iraq's WMD capabilities was "not as rigorous as it should have been" **5/28** Iyad Allawi named interim prime minister
 law to be imposed in troubled regions, as Iraqis are increasingly killed in insurgent attacks **7/15** Philippine troops begin to leave
 red-seat National Assembly selected by Iraqi National Conference **8/27** Najaf forces loyal to al-Sadr leave the Imam Ali Mosque
 les Duelfer, says Iraq's WMD program was essentially destroyed in 1991 gulf war, and Saddam ended Iraq's nuclear program after
 offensive to retake Fallujah. Allawi declares martial law **11/8** U.S. launches all-out assault on Fallujah **11/15** U.S. says its troops
 osul

ish leader Jalal Talabani sworn in as new interim president; Ibrahim al-Jaafari designated new prime minister **5/1** Disclosure of
 Cheney claims the insurgency is in its "last throes" **7/19** Report by U.K. research groups estimates 25,000 Iraqi civilians killed since
 a religious festival; nearly a thousand pilgrims die **10/15** Iraqis vote in referendum to ratify draft constitution **10/16** U.S. air
 ial published estimate, the Pentagon states that at least 26,000 Iraqis have been killed or injured between January 1, 2004 and
 realing that Bush told British Prime Minister Tony Blair during talks in April 2004 that he was considering bombing Al-Jazeera; Blair is

reprisals against Sunnis **3/19** *Time* reveals that U.S. Marines allegedly killed at least fifteen unarmed Iraqi civilians in Haditha the
 Nuri Kamal al-Maliki chosen to replace Ibrahim al-Jaafari as Iraq's prime minister **5/20** Maliki oversees the formation of Iraq's first
 rs found in Youssifiyah **7/3** U.S. soldier charged with rape and murder of a young Iraqi girl in March 2005 in Mahmudiya, south of
 eports that 1,666 bombs exploded in Iraq in July, the highest monthly total **9/20** UN report estimates that hundreds more Iraqis
 ops withdraw from Iraq, handing control of Dhi Qar province to Iraqi troops **9/26** Release of the partly declassified April 2006
 s, breeding a deep resentment of U.S. involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement"



ABU GHRAIB, JUNE 23, 2006. REUTERS/WATHIQ KHUZAIE/LANDOV

In August 2004, CJR asked Farnaz Fassibi of The Wall Street Journal to keep a diary of her time in Iraq. Before we could print her piece, we were scooped, inadvertently, by Fassibi herself. She often sent e-mails to friends, and her September 2004 letter reflected her mood at the time: grim. "Being a foreign correspondent in Baghdad these days is like being under virtual house arrest," she began, and then later, "The genie of terrorism, chaos, and mayhem has been unleashed . . . as a result of American mistakes." Somebody in the chain put the letter on the Internet, and it went around the world. Among fellow journalists the reaction was swift: some worried that an objective reporter had revealed so much; others felt she made it seem as if no reporting could be accomplished in Iraq; still others thought the e-mail was dead on. Meanwhile, something about the personal nature of the note communicated the reality, more forcefully than yards of standard prose, of what Iraqis call "the situation." Here at CJR we wanted more, and for our forty-fifth anniversary issue we interviewed Fassibi and forty-six other journalists who have covered the war in Iraq. Out of their anecdotes and insights we constructed an oral history — the first of its kind. These people are covering the most significant story of our time and doing it under circumstances that nearly defy belief. They have lived and studied "the situation" closely, some of them for four years or more. This is their story.



Above: A U.S. military Black Hawk helicopter burns after crashing in Tikrit. October 25, 2003. REUTERS/DAMIR SAGOLJ/LANDOV.
 Right: A statue of Saddam Hussein is felled in central Baghdad. April 9, 2003. GORAN TOMASEVIC/REUTERS/LANDOV

In the Beginning

Dexter Filkins

The New York Times

If you look at the whole arc of this thing, it used to be easy in the beginning, but it was never easy. I remember literally the first day I went into Iraq, and it was the day of the invasion. I drove in on my own; I was one of a very small handful of people that actually got across the border in Kuwait. And I was what the American military called a unilateral [laughing], which is, I just had my own car. I think it took about twelve hours that day to find my way across the border into Iraq. In the invasion I was on my own completely; I had an Arabic translator and I had a photographer, and we made our way to Baghdad by ourselves, basically, and it was pretty insane, and I probably wouldn't do it again.

I remember, literally the first day, driving into Safwan, which is the first town on the border when you cross over. It's where they signed the surrender in 1991. And I went in there thinking that this is probably going to be something like what I saw in Afghanistan, which was cheering crowds and people throwing their turbans off, and everybody happy to see the American forces. And that wasn't the case at all. To me, it looked like we'd pried the doors off a mental institution, and there were a bunch of people standing around with their jaws hanging open. Some people were absolutely horrified, people were crying, some people were cheering, some people were — you could tell how afraid they were. Some people, you could sense that there was emotion that they didn't want to express, so they didn't. There was a lot of uncertainty.



But it was pretty scary, too. I remember that moment when I arrived in Safwan: the great concern of many of the people there — they were all Shiites — was that there were secret police all over the place, and as soon as the Americans left, the secret police were going to come in and arrest everybody and kill them. So everyone was totally horrified and really afraid to talk to us, and it was really, really dangerous because there were Iraqi Army people all over the place, and there were guys taking their uniforms off, there were tanks up the road and stuff going off, and it was really, really crazy, and it wasn't anything like Afghanistan. I mean, Afghanistan was like a tea party compared to Iraq, just in terms of size and just insanity. Iraq was just orders of magnitude greater. Whatever expectations that I brought in across the border that day, I just chucked immediately because it was totally different. It was clear immediately that it was going to be a lot harder to work. It really was.

Peter Maass

The New York Times Magazine

The Marines [on the way to Baghdad] took a bridge, and then took the other side of the bridge, and seized the road that went from

Baghdad to the bridge, and they set up a perimeter. And unfortunately, because this road was actually an escape route for civilians who were trying to leave Baghdad, there were cars that came up the road to leave Baghdad by the bridge that the Marines had just taken. And, because the Marines had not been able to drive vehicles over the bridge, because the bridge was damaged, civilians who were driving up the road to flee Baghdad over the bridge did not see any American military vehicles and thought, "Fine, it's safe," because the Marines were dug in, into camouflage positions, setting up their new perimeter on this road. So what happened was, civilian vehicles drove up this road, and the Marines shot them up.

I was two hundred or three hundred meters back. The road bends just a little bit, and there are some small houses and stores on the side of the road. So I could not see what was happening down the road. I was with the commander. I knew that there were vehicles coming up and they were taken care of. We assumed they were all military vehicles. Or ordinary vehicles carrying Republican Guard or whatever, because, you know, we didn't really know the situation. But the Marines, particularly the snipers who were on the front line, who were looking through scopes and could see faces in vehicles, knew what was going on. And the photographers were there. So, the photographers heard the sniper commanders saying, "Don't shoot, don't shoot." The snipers would fire to disable the vehicles, hit the engine block, hit the tire so the vehicle can't go forward. Even



An Iraqi mother comforts her two-year-old son at the Saddam Hospital in Tikrit, where the child was recovering from injuries caused by shrapnel when their house was hit during a U.S.-led coalition bombing raid. April 17, 2003. REUTERS/JERRY LAMPEN/LANDOV

though the orders were, let the snipers handle it, when the Marines, the ordinary grunts, heard one or two shots from a sniper, they'd all open up. So, you had all these civilians, women and children, getting killed on that road.

[In the morning] I just kind of walked down there and looked at the vehicles and saw the civilian bodies. And on the side of the

road there were a couple of civilians who were burying the bodies, and one of them spoke a little bit of English. He had been in one of the vehicles and told me what had happened. And so I was able to see with my own eyes the result of what had happened. I was able to see dead civilians, cars along this road that were shot full of holes, the bodies were still there,

and there were witnesses there. The title of the story in *The New York Times Magazine* was "Good Kills," because the battalion commander, [Lieutenant Colonel] Bryan McCoy, when I was with him during the battle, I had asked him, "How are things going?" And he had a cigar at that moment, I think, and he said, "Oh, you know, it's a day of good kills." And that, "good kills," is kind of a military term that officers and soldiers will use, meaning their job is to kill people, the right people. But he didn't know, at that time he didn't know that there were civilians being killed.

He did realize afterwards. And a lot of people in that battalion knew, not just the ones who shot those vehicles. And I think, actually, when they were shooting, they didn't know whether there were civilians in them or not, they were just scared. There was one marine who I quoted in the story, who was on the road checking out the bodies. And one of the photographers was with me at that moment, and the photographer was saying, not in a whisper, "This should not have happened. This was wrong." And, this particular marine heard that and swore, said something. So I went up to him and said, "Well, what do you think about what happened?" — because he was amid all the bodies, as I was — and he kind of said, "Look, you know, you can't second-guess it. We've got to keep ourselves safe. We didn't know who was in the vehicles. This is war, and this is what happens in war." And so I put that in, paraphrasing his words, into the story. Two days later, Baghdad falls. This battalion, by the way, was the battalion that took down the statue of Saddam.

Larry Kaplow Cox Newspapers

I remember the day the Americans came into Baghdad [April 9], and I was standing by the side of the street watching the convoy go by. And some of the Humvees had little American flags on the antennas,

just a couple of them. An Iraqi ophthalmologist — there were two from the eye center nearby — saw me going to the crowd and they spoke some English. And they said to me, “Look, you’ve got to tell them to take these flags off the Humvees. They’re going to make people so mad.” And I said, “Well, what makes you mad about it?” And he said, “They’re Americans and that’s the American flag. That’s what occupiers do. That’s an occupation and that’s what people don’t want here.” And I think a lot of us picked up on the first day a lot of very ambivalent feelings, and those feelings were basically completely overwhelmed by the images and, most important, the superficial event that took place that day — the statue being taken down, the Americans taking control of the city.

Anne Garrels

NPR

The toppling of statue — yes, there were people celebrating, but there were as many people standing in shock. It was not just one big party, as I think the cameras tried to make it out to be. In fact, *Morning Edition* called me after the first feed, and they were seeing the TV coverage, and said, “Do you want to redo it for the next feed, because it seems like the pictures are people celebrating.” And I said, “Well, there are so few people trying to pull down the statue that they can’t do it themselves; the Marines have had to intervene, rightly or wrongly, with a crane to pull it down.” Many people were just sort of standing, hoping for the best, but they weren’t joyous; there was a very mixed feeling about seeing American soldiers in their midst.

And there was a quote. A man was standing next to me, a university professor, by pure chance, and he said to me, “You understand, you will now have to be in complete control, and we will resent you every step of the way.” And he was so right. The only problem was that of course the U.S. was



A patient sits on a bed without a mattress at the asylum in the Al Rashad teaching hospital on the outskirts of Baghdad. The facility had been abandoned by doctors and looted by a mob of Iraqis. April 18, 2003.

REUTERS/JERRY LAMPEN/LANDOV

never in complete control and the resentment was probably even greater because of it.

Larry Kaplow

Cox Newspapers

You were coming across American soldiers who looked like they’d just beamed down from a spacecraft, and had no idea which way was which and what they were doing and who they should be looking out for, and at the same time were mingling with Iraqis on foot, and stopping in juice shops for drinks.

Jane Arraf

CNN

It was a free-for-all in every sense of the word. Along with the unrestrained looting and the chaos that that implied, there were also enormous possibilities to do all kinds of reporting. And if you had a bureau there, like we did, and it was a known bureau and a known company like CNN was, it was a beacon for everybody. It was a beacon for Iraqis

who believed they had stories. Iraqis would show up, there would be Iraqis lined up outside the door. There would be the Iraqis who needed medicine for their dying mothers, there would be the Iraqis who told you they had nuclear documents in their basement and would you like to come and look [laughter]. You know, there was almost that pang when you turned somebody away, [you were] thinking, “Damn, maybe this guy really does have nuclear weapons in his basement, but I don’t have time.” So you never really knew. And then there would be the line for the American soldiers who hadn’t talked to their family in six months. Everywhere you went, because we had satellite phones, there would be people desperate, desperate, desperate to get in touch with their families.

Nir Rosen

Freelance writer

My first day there [April 13, 2003], I had a driver, a Shia driver, drive me around, and he took me to

Sadr City, which at the time was still called Saddam City. But the event that had a lasting effect on me was a week later — going to a Sunni mosque in the al Adhamiya district. I was actually going there just to meet an old college friend who was in Baghdad and I thought I would catch up with her. She was at the mosque. Iraq's most important Sunni cleric had just gotten back from five years of exile, and about ten thousand people had come to hear him speak, and he was emphasizing Sunni-Shia unity [and] opposition to the Americans from the first day.

And these marines, a patrol of marines walked in on the whole event — on the Friday service with ten thousand people there — and this was like the most pro-Saddam neighborhood in Baghdad — wealthy Sunni Baathists. They walked right into the crowd on the street, and there was a very tense standoff. They were pointing their machine guns at the crowd. The crowd was very angry.

Richard Engel

NBC

They were finding documents — everyone was looting the govern-

ment buildings and finding the files — [Saddam Hussein's government] had secret files on them, and they were finding out that their neighbors had been informing on them for years. Some of the problems that we're still suffering from were already becoming evident at this stage: all of the rage and mismanagement, frustration and anger.

A perfect anecdote: I read it in a local newspaper and chased it down and it was a true story. In Basra there was a farmer and he had a small herd of cows — let's say four or five cows. In the late

Iraqi Shiite men carry religious flags on a pilgrimage to Karbala. The pilgrimage, banned under Saddam Hussein, had last been made in 1977. April 19, 2003. REUTERS/YANNIS BEHRAKIS/LANDOV



nineties, this farmer had gone to the local office of the Ministry of Agriculture and had asked for some medicine because one of his cows had some sort of illness. And, you know, typical, disorganized, inefficient government — they said no, come back, go to a different office, they gave him a bit of a runaround, and all of his cows died, and his livelihood was destroyed. And these kinds of things happen. Right after the war, this farmer, we're talking five years later, went back and found that local government official, and said, "You owe me four cows, plus interest, or I'm going to kill you." The guy didn't have the money, or said he didn't have the money, and he was killed. There was a sense of euphoria and opportunity, but there was also the opportunity to get even.

Rajiv Chandrasekaran
The Washington Post

I was one of the first reporters into the Baghdad Museum. I saw rooms that had been stripped bare. I saw people with crowbars running in to pry open cases. But just walking through that museum and seeing it destroyed by looters was heart-wrenching. For the first time, I started to think — "We've come here without a plan. It would have taken one tank in front of this building to have protected it, yet we didn't do a single thing to stop it. Did we really come into this with no postwar plan?"

Jane Arraf
CNN

The day that Mosul fell [April 11], we were in the palace when it was being looted and it was extraordinary. We walked into the palace and there were no U.S. forces, really nobody in control, and the world had gone out that the Iraqi army had gone and that the palace was there and it was open. And entire families came. They didn't just come and tour the place. They came and they tore the door hinges off, they came and they took away the

marble, and the place was really being dismantled in front of us. We did live shots from there and we did live interviews. And it was an absolutely remarkable thing because it was so unrestrained. That morning we'd gone in thinking, "This is it, this is the end of the Iraqi regime, this is the dawn of a new age." By sundown that day, we had a security guy who was getting really nervous because people were starting to get a little aggressive.

Elizabeth Palmer
CBS News

There were many unsecured weapons caches in the schools, as I recall, because I think that Iraqi forces at the time thought they would be a good place to hide things because they didn't look very suspect. But the American forces were just overwhelmed, and at that stage nobody — at least not the military — was taking the probability of a really well-equipped and well-organized insurgency properly or seriously, and so there was no feeling that these weapons were being stolen by a group that would become a serious enemy.

Jane Arraf
CNN

In Mosul, this guy took a knife out from under his shirt and he stabbed this portrait of Saddam, and he stabbed and stabbed and stabbed and slashed at his eyes and I watched this and thought, "Oh my God." I had to remind myself that Saddam is gone. [The man with the knife is] not going to be punished.

Larry Kaplow
Cox Newspapers

The chaos went on — people forget — for two months at a high volume, high intensity. Even a month and a half after the fall of the government, people were going around in buses and picking a building, go up there and load up and drive back to Sadr City. And they would dismantle

I told people I was an American with *The Washington Post* and I was embraced, I was welcomed into people's homes. They wanted to tell me their stories. These were people who couldn't speak freely, in many cases, for their entire adult lives.

buildings, first of all the valuable and movable things, then the furniture and then the windows and then the window frames and the electrical and the light fixtures and eventually strip the thing bare. This was going on in view of American soldiers, sometimes literally across the street from where soldiers would be guarding some of the few places that they were told to guard. And it was true — and famously or infamously true — that the oil ministry was one of the few buildings that was guarded from the very beginning.

Anne Garrels
NPR

People were shocked that the U.S. did nothing, and they will forever remember that virtually the only building — it wasn't the only building but one of the few buildings — that was protected was the oil ministry; that just summed up to so many Iraqis why the U.S. was there, and confirmed their worst fears. And it also played to the utter naïveté of the Americans, because it wasn't just Iraqis letting off steam, as Rumsfeld said. It was Baathists going around destroying documents — making Iraq ungovernable: destroying drivers' license records, all of the things that make a city able to be governed. And it was the beginning of the insurgency.

Liberties and Ambiguities

Chris Hondros
Getty Images

Once the fighting stopped, it seemed like the country was getting more pacified. By mid-April or so, all of the most experienced war journalists said, "Okay, now we can do it our way," and, much to the shock and amazement of our embed people, we hired local Iraqis, you know? "Hey, do you have a car?" "Yes, have a car, sir. Yes, no problem." "Okay, come here tomorrow. We'll pay you forty dollars a day." "Okay, yes, no problem." You know, like we nor-

About 500 people turned on us instantly and surged. I remember there was an old man saying, 'Kill them! Kill them! Kill them!' And they started to beat the hell out of us.

mally do in Africa, Asia, anywhere else. That whole first year Iraq was pretty safe to cover, relatively speaking.

Elizabeth Palmer
CBS News

It was a fool's paradise in a way. I felt we could go anywhere, and we did, including into the Green Zone, which was extraordinary, because we were able to stroll around Saddam's playground those days and see that crazy canal system where he'd putter around on his little boats.

Rajiv Chandrasekaran
The Washington Post

It wasn't like we were greeted with flowers and sweets, but it was an incredibly warm welcome. I'm fond

of saying that back then the greatest risk I felt I was in was being invited into somebody's house and being served food of sketchy origin or tea made from water pumped directly from the Tigris River. When I went up and told people I was an American with *The Washington Post*, I was embraced, I was welcomed into people's homes. They wanted to tell me their stories. These were people who couldn't speak freely, in many cases, for their entire adult lives.

Anthony Shadid
The Washington Post

To me, 2003 was really distinctive. It was unusual in a lot of ways. The most unusual was that for the first time, with the possible exception of Lebanon and Palestine, you had an Arab country where you could really try to get a handle on what was going on in the country, try to understand it in a more fundamental way. For so long I had been dealing with information ministries, with censorship, with intimidation, with a certain hesitation to speak. For that period after the fall of Saddam in April 2003, you could really do any story you wanted as long as you were determined enough, dogged enough, patient enough.

Nir Rosen
Freelance writer

Right away the Shia clerics — the Shias were the ones who were supposed to welcome the Americans as the liberators — were certainly happy that Saddam was gone. But nobody was thanking the Americans. Nobody was greeting them as liberators. [Saddam] was an authority figure, and authority right away became the mosque. Everything else was wiped out. The vacuum was immediately filled up by the clerics, the tribal leaders, but in Baghdad, mostly clerics. And they were talking about pretty much the same thing: they were warning against the Americans, they were telling the Americans to leave, they were worried about American values

corrupting their values — this is what you heard in every single mosque throughout the country.

Larry Kaplow
Cox Newspapers

In November of 2003 I was supposed to just go do a simple story on troops celebrating Thanksgiving. So I went to a base in Fallujah, and our car broke down within a hundred meters of the base. My translator and I hitchhiked into Fallujah and got a tow truck to pick us up, pick up the car, and then drive us in his tow truck to Baghdad with the car in tow. We knew it was a little dicey and I told my translator, "I won't speak any English, and I can kind of pass myself off as an Iraqi." And we did that, but it was still something you could do in those days. You could just show up in Fallujah and ask for help.

Dexter Filkins
The New York Times

We used to go out to dinner at night. It's hard to imagine. I remember one really nice place we used to go called Nabil's. In 2003, we used to go there, not even regularly, but we went there a few times. It was very nice. It was blown up on Christmas Eve of that year. I more or less did anything I wanted. I went into Sunni villages, I met with insurgents, I met with people who hated the United States and you could sit with them and talk about it. You could go out all day in a place like Ramadi — where I think now your life expectancy would be about twenty minutes.

That started to change as the insurgency got going, that was kind of fall 2003. And I remember the day very clearly because I almost didn't survive [laughing]. Ramadan — first day of Ramadan, October 2003 — it was about eight o'clock in the morning and we were all having coffee and there was a gigantic bomb blast and it shook our house, it was so close. And it was the ICRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross. Two suicide bombers had hit the place. I actually got there before the cops did,



Sadr City resident searches in the Mahaweel mass grave among bags of remains for his nephew, who was killed by secret police in 1995. May 30, 2003. SAMANTHA APPLETON/AURORA PHOTOS

and I remember seeing a suicide bomber — charred remains still clutching the steering wheel — but, you know, bodies everywhere, crowd going insane, as they do.

There were five suicide bombings that day, and I remember hearing the other bombs going off as I was literally walking through the bodies at this place. But we worked there and then drove to another — the second place that had been hit, which was a police station in a neighborhood called Shaab, which is basically a Shiite neighborhood. I stepped out of the car. I was with two photographers. About five hundred people turned on us instantly and surged. I remember there was an old man saying, "Kill them, kill them, kill them!" And so we were grabbed by the crowd and taken by the crowd and they started to beat the hell out of us, and I am reasonably sure they would have killed

us, but the driver, my driver — Walid, who's wonderful and happens to be like six-foot-eight and enormous — he reached into the crowd and pulled me out. And we somehow managed to get free and get into the car, and the crowd jumped on the car to try to stop it, which they were pretty close to doing. You know, three hundred people holding a car back could actually do it. They started to throw bricks into the car, and they were smashing the windows, and one of the photographers I was with, Mike Kamber, [they] busted his head open — it was really awful — and we almost didn't get away. I remember we got back, took Mike to the hospital, and later that day we got back to the house, and I remember — I counted them, and I think it was seventeen bricks in the car; every window was smashed out. But that's just an example of how it started

to change, and the crowd — I remember the crowd — they blamed us for the bombing, you know? Which didn't make a lot of sense to me — I mean, it doesn't make immediate sense — kind of counterintuitive. But it's like before the Americans got here we didn't have these things and you're American, so we're angry at you.

Caroline Hawley
BBC

We would drive to Basra. I remember having a picnic on the side of the road for Christmas 2003. We stopped at the side of the road and had tea and eggs after covering Christmas with the British troops.

Colonel William Darley
Military Review
former public affairs officer

Arabic was — language was the Achilles heel, not just of public af-

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fairs but of the whole operation. If there's any single lesson for the military in general, all aspects of the military, it's first and foremost the ability to speak to people in their own language. It hampered public affairs to no end, but it was a constant, unremitting problem at every level, every operational level.

There was a survey done at the First Cavalry Division, soon after the arrival of a guy named General Chiarelli, who commanded the First Cavalry Division [as of March 2004], and he brought in every company commander, something like a hundred company commanders. One hundred percent, every company commander in the First Cavalry Division, according to General Chiarelli, every one of them said their number one concern, their number one priority, number one problem they had was language. I mean every one of them, it was unanimous, and that's about as rare as you can get, saying if there was one thing they needed to take with them, that they needed to focus on was either getting the language ability themselves or taking with them extremely competent linguists. Constant, unremitting problem.

And that problem has shown up constantly across the board in everything. Operational, logistics, you know, intelligence. But in my area, [public affairs] it was just an unremitting problem.

Dan Murphy
The Christian Science Monitor

We had no concerns whatsoever. I remember one day I said to our guide, "Look, take off, go home, you've had a long day." Afterwards, I walked up the street for half a mile to go to my favorite sweets shop, and I hopped in a cab and got home. I spoke a hell of a lot less Arabic then than I do now, but that was the way it was then. You know, Iraq has a wonderful road network and we could get up in the morning and think, "Shit, you know what? We haven't been to Mosul in a while, let's go there." And you drive to Mosul. I mean, I

drove to Tal Afar and knocked around for a couple of days there and then knocked on the gate of the U.S. base and saw it from their side. Right up until April 2004 we were rolling like that.

Anne Garrels

NPR

I broke the rules and went in with a contractor and did a tour of the Green Zone, went to some bars and hung out — openly. I did not hide my microphone in this case, and people were not nearly as forthcoming as I might have wished, but nonetheless, I got at least a slightly clearer picture, and was able to at least portray what the Green Zone really is like — this bizarre environment where you've got the CIA compound and the Bechtel compound and this security company compound and then the plush AID [Agency for International Development] compound, and the new sports facility for the military, and the embassy guys live over here, and then the security companies have their own bars. And the drug of choice happens to be steroids in this war — Who'd have thunk it?

The Reign of the CPA

Patrick Cockburn

The Independent (London)

At a certain point, in 2003, I remember the exact moment the British had moved inside the Green Zone, and I remember going to see a senior diplomat who I actually knew quite well and who was actually quite intelligent. But because they were inside the Green Zone, they knew less and less about what was happening in Iraq, and what they did know was all second-hand. Now on this day, I was rather late to see this diplomat because there were enormous traffic jams all over Baghdad because there was a shortage of fuel, of gasoline.

So I was talking to him and I mentioned this to him and he said, "But I just looked at figures show-

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ing there's plenty of gasoline." Now everybody in the rest of Baghdad knew that there was a shortage of gasoline. The only people that didn't were inside the Green Zone.

Jon Lee Anderson

The New Yorker

I returned before the end of June 2003 and stayed for the summer. Of course, this is when the insurgency really did pick up, when Paul Bremer, the CPA [Coalition Provisional Authority] administrator, was getting a grip on his job [the CPA served as a transitional government from April 2003 until June 2004]. And I wrote a long piece in *The New Yorker*, which appeared in August — I think the title was "Iraq's Bloody Summer." I did have an interview with Paul Bremer on my last night in the country, though I'd already filed my piece. And I came away pretty disheartened by what I saw as a very kind of imperious, closed-off Green Zone under the CPA.

I remember receiving e-mails

that I think we all received, announcing civic action — little civic action jobs like "beanies for Baghdad," handing out beanie toys — and all of this sort of bureaucracy that was setting up within the confines of Saddam's old Republican Palace, and a real disconnect with what was going on outside the walls of the Green Zone, or what was then coming to be called the Green Zone. All the Iraqis I knew were going through various degrees of despair and some fled the country that summer; there were the first assassinations taking place, the influx of refugees coming back, the setting up of newspapers, political parties — it was a real Tower of Babel.

Alissa Rubin

Los Angeles Times

Well, I always personally found [U.S. government briefings] valuable. I know many other people didn't because if you looked at them in terms of objective truth, they weren't very useful. But in

terms of how the U.S. government wanted us to see things, they were quite useful. And it's important to know what the government's narrative is. Because in any conflict there are competing narratives, and our job, from my point of view, is to sort through them and provide a reality check on all of them.

Patrick Cockburn

The Independent

I went to some CPA briefings. I thought that they were very propagandistic. They were based in trying to prove and make a political point that the U.S. being in Iraq was and is fighting the war on terror. This meant continual emphasis on foreign groups, when there was in fact very little evidence for this. In fact, all the evidence was the other way. The insurgency was almost entirely Iraqi. And there might have been many insurgents who were formerly in the army but it was always presented as if this was somehow orchestrated by former senior officials around Sad-

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dam. Again there was no evidence for this. I found it interesting to know what was the official line being put out, but I thought it was the crudest propaganda and not useful in terms of actual objective information.

Jon Lee Anderson
The New Yorker

I remember going to a few of those briefings and seeing — especially in the Bremer period — the kind of almost shout-downs of journalists who dared to suggest that there was anything approaching an insurgency in Iraq. I still remember the date: it was August 7, 2003, and I suggested to [Bremer] that I wondered how he felt in terms of his access to — now, I said this very diplomatically; after all, he was the senior government official and I was a reporter — and I said in very diplomatic terms, “How do you feel in here, you have these big barriers” — they were erecting even more permanent barriers around the Green Zone — “How do you feel in here? I’m traveling outside and I see that you have to go out with armed escorts. How reliable do you feel your information is about the state of the country and the way people feel?” And he said, “Fine,” and I said, “Well, I’m hearing a lot of increasing anger by a lot of the Iraqis I know, and it has me worried,” and it did, and I said, “I wonder what you think about that.” And he got very angry with me. He became visibly testy and he said, “I don’t know who your sources are. I go all over this country and I don’t hear the things you’re hearing. I don’t know where you get your information.” And that was the end of that. I left the country in mid-August 2003, feeling really quite demoralized and upset and worried about what was going to happen in Iraq, because I thought there was a real divide between perception and reality. Speaking for myself, I found the CPA to be very much a kind of an American bureaucracy that almost immediately had isolated itself. And shrewdly, the insurgents, the early

insurgents perceived that as well, and did everything they could to make the occupation of Iraq less a story of gradual reconstruction and pacification and one of counterinsurgency and one of occupation.

Borzou Daragahi
Los Angeles Times

I just remember having this feeling like — this is a very political exercise, and they’re a product for the media at this point. What would be really horrible is if [the CPA] actually believe this crap. And I remember thinking that from the very beginning: I hope they don’t

believe this stuff, I hope they’re not consuming this stuff themselves. And pretty soon it started dawning on me — No, they’re not just BSing us because we’re the public, they actually believe this stuff. My God, are we in trouble!

Rajiv Chandrasekaran
The Washington Post

The military was far easier to deal with, and, in some ways, far more understanding of what we were doing than the CPA. Their press office was headed by Dan Senor, Bremer’s spokesman. Their press office was packed with Republican Party

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loyalists, people who were hired for their political views, not because they possessed a great degree of expertise in public relations or expertise in the Middle East or in post-conflict reconstruction. They were the ones who had put people on blacklists — they were just incredibly sensitive about anything that might not project the CPA in the most favorable light possible. Reporters were seen as either sympathetic and on their side or those who didn't get it. And if you didn't get it, either you were perhaps granted some interviews so that you would get it or you would be written off as a lost cause.

Patrick Graham
Freelance writer

One really interesting thing was to sit down with people who were either in the insurgency or close to it and watch the [CPA] briefings on Al-Jazeera or Al-Arabiya. I did that a lot, and that was really interesting because what happened was Dan Senor or [Brigadier General Mark] Kimmitt [Bremer's spokesmen] would basically insult the insurgency, either by calling them small criminals, or really demonize the Sunni minority.

We'd hear the spin and how everything was terrific and they'd repaired water plants and so on, and then a newcomer would put up his hand and say, "Scuse me, but what I'm seeing out on the streets has nothing to do with what you are describing."

I think those briefings were one of the reasons that the Sunni minority became so anti-American, because they were aimed for an American domestic audience, and the contempt that Kimmitt and Senor heaped on the Sunnis and the people that were fighting — "dead-enders" and "criminals," "weak and coward-like," and all the insults that he used — really got the back up of the people. Those briefings were key to making the Sunni minority realize that

they would not be part of the new Iraq. I think that Senor and Kimmitt were one of the major forces in making the country fall apart. They were very effective in their propaganda for journalists and for Americans who didn't know what was going on, but in Iraq it was a disaster. Even the Shia couldn't believe what they were saying, they were just so dishonest. That was my reaction. The briefings — this may work in New Jersey, but in Iraq it's a disaster.

General Abizaid went to Fallujah — I think it was Ramadan, it was around November 2003 — and his convoy was attacked, and I was sitting with a group of people who had family members in the insurgency, and the question for Kimmitt was, "Do you think that it was an organized attack?" And he said, "No, no, this was just nothing . . . it's just a group of criminals attacking the" — I can't remember exactly — "this group of criminals in Fallujah who are very unpopular." And the group of people sitting with me were laughing. They thought the insurgency had intelligence that Abizaid was there, that it was a very coordinated attack, the people were very, very pleased by it — it was the exact opposite of the way it was being portrayed. It was actually an example of how strong and well-organized the insurgency was. And Kimmitt's denial of it and his contempt for it was completely misleading to an American audience. And just made the Iraqis that I was with laugh at him.

Luke Baker
Reuters

The people within the U.S. military that dealt with the press in Baghdad were quite intimidating toward us at times; they felt that we asked too many questions when Reuters had people detained, for example,



Marines exercise at their patrol base in Saadah, near the Syrian border. November 29, 2005.
AP PHOTO/JACOB SILBERBERG



L. Paul Bremer arrives at Al-Shaab stadium in Baghdad to congratulate the Iraqi national soccer team after its surprise victory over Saudi Arabia. May 15, 2004. AP WIDE WORLD/SAURABH DAS

after the incident in Fallujah [in January 2004]. These were Iraqi employees of Reuters, cameraman and soundman and a driver, who were shot at when they were trying to film an incident after a U.S. helicopter had been brought down. And they were filming at the scene; they were shot at by U.S. troops. They then jumped in their car and left because they were worried that they were being fired upon. The U.S. troops chased them down, helicopters chased them down, firing on them, and then detained them. [The military] said that they were basically terrorists posing as journalists at the scene, who fired on U.S. troops — I mean it's absolute fantasyland. But they were detained, held, abused, put in stressful positions, sort of threatened, stripped, made to do obscene things, and eventually they were released, and that's when we called for an investigation.

But what I was going to say is that when we asked questions about that in press conferences, and I would go to the press conferences in Baghdad, the general that was the main spokesman, General Kimmitt was very dismissive of us, threatened us, asked us not to ask more questions. [Before] one press conference he asked me, "Are you going to ask me any more obnoxious questions?" and I said I might, and he said, "Well, why don't you ask me them now?" I said, "Well I'd rather ask you on the record in the press conference." And he said, "Well," tapping the gun at his side, "You've gotta watch out." Joking, but tapping the gun at his side.

Caroline Hawley
BBC

We had the most difficulty with the CPA when Paul Bremer was in

power. He had given an interview to a BBC program called *Panorama* that was quite a hard-hitting interview, and I don't think he was used to that. And certainly after that we had a difficult time getting access to Paul Bremer. I understood there were threats that we might be barred from embeds as a result. That actually didn't happen, but there was certainly a kind of air of nastiness, and I had it reported back to me from one coalition official that other coalition officials were accusing me of being able to smell sewage in a bed of roses.

Jon Lee Anderson
The New Yorker

I do fault the CPA and the coalition for having done its best to keep bad news away from the public, and there's been a number of ways they've done that. There is now this notorious writ that no Ameri-

can coffins can be photographed; Bush's decision never to appear at the funeral of a soldier. This, in addition to the daily playing down of bad news, from Bush all the way down to the field command level, over a very crucial period of time, has confused the public, made journalists' jobs much more difficult, and to a certain degree I regard this huge propaganda effort as also pernicious and having been extremely dangerous to us.

Because, for instance, months before people began writing about

how dangerous the Baghdad airport highway was, the Americans and the Brits — I'm speaking of the military — stopped using the road. They stopped using the road. They didn't announce it; they choppered to and from the Green Zone. Did they admit openly that that road had become Suicide Alley? There was one particular series of months, I think it was the fall of 2004, in which there had been forty-four suicide bombings along the road, just that little stretch of road.

A few months before Marla [Ruzicka, an aid worker and activist] was killed [April 16, 2005], there was a willfulness about the way Baghdad, the war, Iraq was being presented, the security situation, which I think also led a great number of people to Iraq who were subsequently kidnapped and killed, who should have known better but didn't, because of the nature of the place [and] the idea that "Oh, only six out of the sixteen provinces are dangerous," that kind of language. I think that this made it very difficult.

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Elizabeth Palmer CBS News

It was cognitive dissonance to sit in those press briefings, and it became funny, because inevitably there'd be a new reporter at the press briefing of the day who'd — we'd hear the spin and how everything was terrific and they'd repaired water plants and restored power and so on, and then the newcomer would put up his hand and say, "Scuse me, but what I'm seeing out on the streets has nothing to do with what you're describing and I'm wondering if you could explain the discrepancy" [laughing]. And everybody in the press corps would smile because it really was the fresh eye, the freshly realized, the total disconnect, you know?

James Hider *The Times* (London)

In Fallujah [the Americans had] dropped some bombs [in late February 2004], some five-hundred-pound bombs showing the Iraqis that they were still here. I think they call it "dissuasive fire" or something like that. And we went to this little house just outside Fallujah, and we met these people — the bomb had landed fairly close to their house. It hadn't hit anything, it just landed in the desert, and the people said, "Our neighbor, his wife had a miscarriage from the shock of the bomb. What were they bombing? We're inno-

cent people, just peasant farmers." You know, they were very confused about why this bomb had been dropped. Apparently, as far as I could tell, it had been dropped to dissuade the guerrillas from chancing their arms — because they had just attacked a police station a week before or something. So it was a show of force.

And I went back to the Green Zone and [Lieutenant] General [Ricardo] Sanchez [commander of coalition ground forces] was doing a press conference, and I had this completely surreal exchange with him. I said, "I've just been out in Fallujah and you've bombed a field, a woman's had a miscarriage, what were you trying to do?" And he said, "We hit what we were aiming at." And I said, "What were you aiming at?" And he said, "What we hit." And I started laughing and everyone started laughing at this bizarre exchange, and I think he thought they were laughing with him. But I think they were laughing at this bizarre rhetoric of the Green Zone that had no relation really to what was going on around.

Omens and Incidents

Borzou Daragahi
Los Angeles Times

I know how religious the people in Iraq are, how traditional they are with regard to gender relations and stuff like that. I would see certain stuff and I would just cringe and want to say [to U.S. soldiers], "You guys are really, really making a bad name for yourself here by storming into this guy's house with your shoes on. This guy's done nothing and yet you're going to make an enemy out of him because he's gonna talk about you guys for the rest of his life, and that day when they came storming into my house with their shoes on — nobody walks into my house with their shoes on!"

One time I was really tempted to say something to U.S. soldiers when I was in Najaf. And Najaf is

a very American-friendly place in general. And there were these soldiers and they were just sitting there, taking pieces of bread and throwing them at each other. They were just kids — like twenty-two years old — just playing around. There's these Iraqi police officers looking at this from out the window and they're just totally aghast. They're totally shocked: Look at what they're doing to bread! You know, bread is considered holy in Islam. You know, you're just not supposed to do that. People pick

up pieces of bread and you're not supposed to step on bread. You're not supposed to play with bread. And I felt tempted to say something and I didn't. I just didn't feel it was my place.

Nir Rosen
Freelance writer

I tried to interact with the Iraqis who were being ignored. And even by then there was a great deal of literature being produced by various religious organizations; they all had their own newspapers

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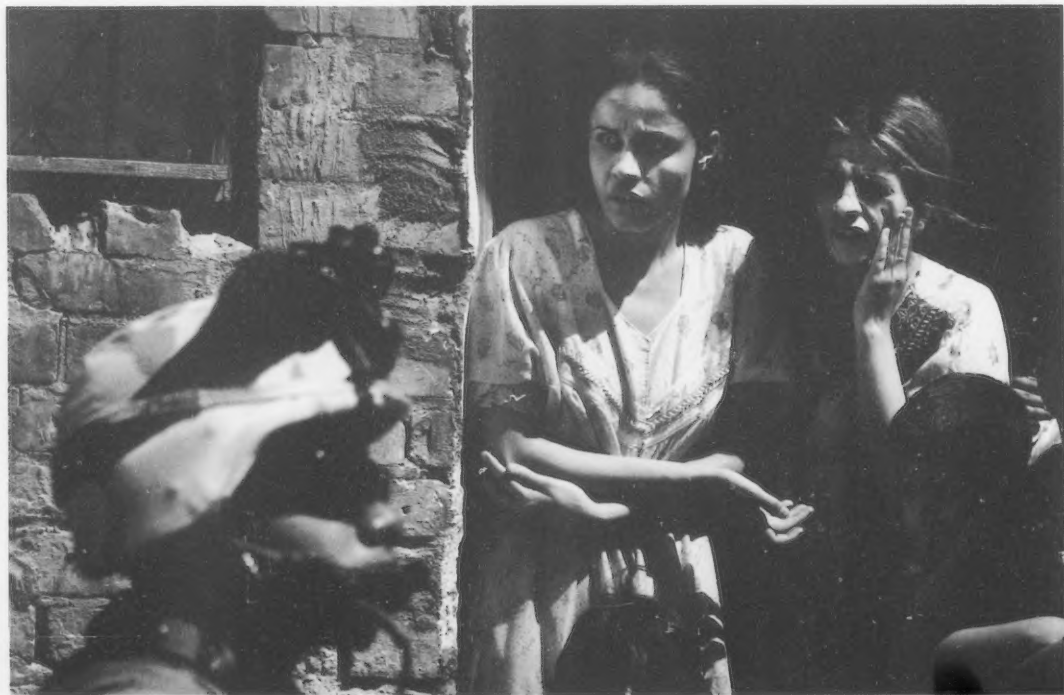
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Above: Iraqi women and children watch U.S. paratroopers in the 1-504th regiment of the Eighty-second Airborne Division, nicknamed the "Red Devils," raid their house in Nassar el al Salaam, a suspected insurgent compound. November 26, 2003.

Below: Iraqi women watch as U.S. forces lead away suspected insurgents after gun battles between insurgents and Iraqi and U.S. forces broke out in a Sunni neighborhood in Baghdad. July 5, 2004.

CHRIS HONDROS/GETTY IMAGES



and journals and magazines and CDs, and they were very clear about their position and their grievances and their attitude towards the Americans. And I think the Americans, for some reason, didn't take religion that seriously as a factor in Iraqi society, which is weird because we're like the most religious nation in the industrialized world. We have a born-again Christian president and the religious right is so powerful, but we didn't think that religion was an important motivator for Iraqis. So we just ignored that, except for the so-called moderate clerics who we could try to use to our advantage. But that Iraqi anger and hostility toward the American occupation, and fear of the Americans, and fear that the Americans are going to corrupt their values, steal their women, bring the Jews in to create a greater Israel, bring the Jews in to divide the land — all these fears that just sounded stupid to us were real for them.

Elizabeth Palmer
CBS News

I've been struck by how essentially humane a lot of the soldiers are, with a very strong sense of right and wrong, which I think comes with growing up in America. And how ill-equipped they were to apply that to a situation like Iraq, without enough historical or geographical or cultural knowledge to actually — unless they were under the command of a very gifted officer, and there are some who are extremely well-equipped, but a lot of them are not — to apply that sort of fairness to Iraqi society. I feel that a huge majority of them are good men trapped in an impossible situation and have not really understood where they are historically, as well as culturally and physically. I think they're hostages of a terrible situation as well; it's given me enormous sympathy for them, and certainly a new appreciation for how ill-prepared they were for the mission, at least in the early days.

I remember early on in Baghdad

— it must have been the end of 2003 — some American soldiers who were very keen to befriend a couple of families — families who had been, who were essentially caretakers of properties in Baghdad. They were very poor and these soldiers wanted to befriend the children. They had this tremendous human instinct to try and help them make life easier. It was just at the time when the insurgency was really getting going, and Iraqis who were seen to have relations with the American forces were in great danger, and the soldiers found it very difficult to accept that this gesture of friendship — their wanting to help look after these children and give them gifts and so on — could, in fact, get the family killed.

Nir Rosen
Freelance writer

The daily things the Iraqis endure — and those that I experienced just because I looked Iraqi and then because I was a male, and a so-called "male of fighting age." My [new Iraqi] friends would ask me, "Why do Americans say 'fuck' so much, what's this word 'fuck'?" I heard that a few times. "Why do Americans spit so much?" They didn't know about chewing dip — the tobacco thing. So they see Americans spitting all the time; they're going into a house on a raid, and in order to stay awake they chew dip and they're spitting constantly, spitting all over people's yards, things like that. Having to deal with the barbed wire everywhere, the tanks and Humvees blocking traffic in your roads, pointing their guns at you, firing into the air, shouting at you. It was constant humiliation and constant fear, because they control your life. They have these huge guns and you can't even communicate with them adequately. And that summer [2003], it was just unbearably hot and American soldiers were dressed in all that gear. Obviously they were not in a good mood. Iraqis had no electricity. They were in a bad mood. It was

always very tense, they were always shouting at Iraqis and shouting at me sometimes. I was walking down the street toward a checkpoint once, and I heard one American soldier say to the other, "That's the biggest fucking Iraqi I ever saw." And the other soldier said, "I don't care how big he is, if

If you look back at how things were reported in that first year, it was pretty close to the way the U.S. government wanted it to be presented, which is, 'It's not so bad, it's coming along, we've got a few criminals but we're handling them.'

he don't stop moving I'm gonna shoot him." And there were one or two other times I heard soldiers talking about shooting me, and whether it was in jest I don't know, but at least I understood and could shout, "Don't shoot, I'm an American!" Most Iraqis couldn't, and that's a very scary thing.

Larry Kaplow
Cox Newspapers

In April 2003, there was the big Fallujah killing, where members of the Eighty-second Airborne opened fire on a demonstration in Fallujah after they said they had heard shots fired. And they killed anywhere from ten to maybe twenty-five Iraqis there. First of all, we could just drive out there in those days. We heard about it somehow, I think maybe on some radio report, and just drove out to the scene and showed up at this little school in the middle of the Fallujah neighborhood. And the Eighty-second Airborne guys were there. And they

said, "Okay, come in, we'll show you around, and we'll tell you our version of what happened." And then you could walk across the street and talk to Iraqis who were around there, and ask them what happened, although it was difficult to get a clear version from either side. It turned out to be a seminal event. Later when you'd talk to insurgents in the days to come, you'd hear them refer to that event.

Patrick Cockburn
The Independent

I was struck at the beginning at how the rules of engagement appeared to allow U.S. forces to open fire when there were civilians around. As in the early stage in Fallujah, according to what has emerged subsequently in writings from there. It was shooting at a crowd of demonstrators in Fallujah which gave the first real boost to militancy there.

Patrick Graham
Freelance writer

The U.S. Army propaganda about who the insurgency was — that they were dead-enders and that was over, a bunch of criminals — was very effective, and that was essentially what was written for a long time. So I think that, in many ways, there was an enormous amount of press self-censorship early on, for about almost the first year of the invasion.

If you look back at how things were reported in that first year, it was pretty close to the way the U.S. government wanted it to be presented, which is, "It's not so bad, it's coming along, we've got a few criminals but we're handling them," when, in fact, what was going on was the Eighty-second Airborne in Fallujah was doing what aggressive, elite units always do, which is create a lot of enemies.

By September or October of 2003, the Eighty-second had already killed at least forty people around Fallujah, probably more like one hundred, some of them even local police, a lot of them

kids, all of them from a tribal area. You just knew things were going to go badly.

Ali Fadhl
Translator, reporter

[In Najaf, August 2004], me and Ivan Watson [of NPR] found ourselves at the top of a tower. We found two American soldiers, very, very young soldiers — they were snipers — at the top room of the tower, and they invited us to eat the MREs [Meals Ready to Eat]. And we were very happy because we didn't eat anything, like only eggs and potatoes all of these days, because there is no food in the city. And we ate with them and started chatting with them, and myself personally, I had like a friendship with them, and one of them called me to come and hold the sniper machine and look through the sniper zoom and look to the [Imam Ali] Shrine, because I wanted to look at it. And we were like joking about the situation until the moment when suddenly we heard the voice coming from the shrine for the prayers. At that time the two soldiers were back in position. They were furious, and I said, "What's wrong?" They said, "The sound — it means something," and I said, "What?" They said, "It does mean that they're calling their soldiers to come kill us, isn't that right?" I said, "No, it's not. It's prayer calls." It seems like these soldiers didn't know that these are prayer calls, because it's long, long prayer calls — it's prayers they do for the martyrs. And they thought that this was something like a call to start fighting.

Patrick Graham
Freelance writer

Iraq wasn't a country that was fact-checkable, right? It wasn't a country where there were a lot of facts. And it wasn't a country that anybody knew anything about, so your problem wasn't selling the story. It was convincing touchy magazines to run things. I had a story on insurgents killed because

the magazine couldn't fact-check it [the story eventually appeared in *Harper's*, which had not commissioned it]. American magazines have been beaten up very badly by various scandals, and they just couldn't take a risk. If you said this is a group of insurgents that I'm with, they're not a bunch of former Baathists, they're fighting for kind of tribal, nationalistic reasons — that was the opposite of what was being written in the press in the fall of 2003. The majority of the articles were that they were a group of Baathists, they're dead-enders, they're criminals, they're disgruntled Sunnis who want to take over the country again. The insurgency was over, the insurgency would soon be over. And I was saying, "No, actually, this is an expression of a minority that's scared and doesn't feel that it's going to participate in the future of the country. It's very tribal; it has to do with the cultural context." And it's very hard to prove that.

Enemies and Civilians

Anthony Shadid
The Washington Post

It was before Saddam's capture. I think it was November 2003. I remember I was out in the countryside in Ramadi, and I was working on a story about how the American military was arresting relatives of suspected insurgents as a way of pressuring [them]. And about the repercussions this was having on the fabric of villages there. And it had huge repercussions. It created vendettas that I don't think the American military understood they were creating.

Anyway, as far as reporting, Iraqis were telling me just fantastic stories about abuse that I just kind of shook my head and blew them off. But I remember one guy was being so detailed about this stuff that I think I even wrote it down in my notebook — because it was remarkable and maybe the detail



Above: Mustafa Jassam pretends to be a Saddam Hussein statue while playing at his aunt's home in Baghdad. He and his family were forced to move after their home was destroyed during the initial invasion of Iraq. November 20, 2003.
Below: Children loot the uniform supply warehouse at a police station in Baghdad. April 12, 2006.

ANDREA BRUCE/THE WASHINGTON POST





Chaos and destruction after a car bomb explodes at the Imam Ali Mosque during Friday prayers in Najaf, killing at least eighty-five people, including one of Iraq's most important Shiite clerics, Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim, sixty-four, who had just delivered a sermon calling for Iraqi unity. August 29, 2003. KATE BROOKS/POLARIS

made me think: maybe there is something here. Like all of us, I didn't follow up.

James Hider
The Times

Everyone I knew from the British press had heard stories of beatings, and fairly severe. People would show us the scars of handcuffs on their hands, whatever, the bruised backs, and I don't think we pursued them nearly as rigorously as we should have. I think it's very difficult to prove who's beaten somebody.

The thing was, it was an extremely violent place, Baghdad. People were getting killed every day, beaten up in the street. I mean I saw somebody being dragged out of his car and stabbed by carjackers. It was really difficult

to pin anything down in those months after the war. There was so much, people telling incredible stories. It was very difficult to find out any sort of accountability, responsibility. If you went and spoke to a soldier, he'd say one thing, and if you spoke to the Iraqi police, they'd say another. And it was difficult to get any hard evidence. I think this is a classic case of the power of images, and it came from the Americans themselves in the end. Seymour Hersh wrote a story [in April 2004] that basically came from those [Abu Ghraib] pictures, and that was the first proof that we had. But it was very difficult — you couldn't get into the camps. People would show you a bruise on their back and say, "American did this." So it was very difficult to

come down hard on that story. But I think that also we didn't investigate enough because there was so much stuff happening at the time, that we didn't delve into it enough.

Larry Kaplow
Cox Newspapers

Well, I didn't ask people about how they were being treated in Abu Ghraib before the big Abu Ghraib story came out, which is probably the biggest single story of the war since the government fell. And in a way I'm glad I hadn't been approached with those stories; I'm not sure I would have believed them if I had heard them before I'd seen the proof, because it seems so outrageous — American soldiers making prisoners get naked and pile on top of each

other and simulate sex acts. But after that happened, yes, I was a lot more on the lookout for those kinds of things.

Patrick Graham
Freelance writer

If you went to the hospital in Fallujah in the fall of 2003, they would tell you about bodies coming from Abu Ghraib with signs of torture. And you heard a lot about the torture. The Eighty-second Airborne had a camp called "The Farm" — Iraqis called it "The Farm" — and the Iraqis talked about being arrested and being, you know, all the stuff that Captain [Ian] Fishback talked about [Fishback was a captain in the Eighty-second Airborne who protested to his superiors about the harsh treatment of detainees]. Fishback talks about guys, cooks with baseball bats being pissed off and breaking prisoners' legs, right? And the Iraqis, in Fallujah they were talking about this.

I didn't realize the extent of — I had doubts about it. How do you prove it until you find someone who's been tortured? How do you do it until you see the body? And how do you know that body came from there? All you could do was write an interview with an Iraqi that said this happened, but is that enough? I don't think that's enough to get published in an American paper.

Dexter Filkins
The New York Times

I'll tell you a very good example of a problem that I've had — that everybody's had — with the military, which has never been resolved. The military complains when there'll be an engagement of one sort or another, whether it's a car bombing or whether it's a bunch of insurgents attacking American soldiers or they blow up a Humvee or something. And the headline says, FOUR AMERICANS KILLED IN HUMVEE ATTACK. And whoever of the American soldiers or civilians or whoever will say, "All you do is report the Americans

who were killed and we wiped out those insurgents that day." But, by and large, when you ask them, "Did you return fire and if you did what were the results of that?" they won't tell you, and they'll say, "Well, we don't do body counts." It's a leftover from Vietnam, kind of a bad memory. "We don't do body counts, and so we're not going to tell you how many people we killed and wounded." And that becomes a huge problem because there'll be, say, a large incident, a lot of people have been killed — insurgents, civilians, and American

It was always about hearts and minds, hearts and minds, and you would talk to civilians and they would say, 'Well, how can they win our hearts and minds? They're killing us . . . What hearts and minds are they talking about?'

soldiers — huge battles going on, and you're trying to get some sense of what actually happened and maybe somebody's making an accusation, and they'll say, "Well, we don't do body counts," and that's like just a conversation stopper: "We don't do body counts, sorry." Well, it turns out they really do do body counts and they always do them. The military will decide that it is in its interests on this particular day to tell you how many insurgents they killed and wounded, they will have a very precise number, and they'll say, "Well, actually, we killed seventeen and wounded forty-two and we took ten of them prisoner." And then you'll scratch your head and say, "Well, I thought you didn't do body counts?"

Nancy Youssef
Knight Ridder (McClatchy)

You know, my focus since I've been reporting here has been on civilian casualties. Really since the beginning, actually. In 2003, you know, there were a million stories to pursue. I drove in the day after the regime fell. And there were these dead bodies all over the street, these swollen bodies on the sides of the streets, and I was curious. How many people died, how many civilians died in this conflict? You could go anywhere and you could do anything, and I really wanted us — and Knight Ridder wanted us — to be out on the forefront on civilian casualties. So my three colleagues and I, we got a list of every major hospital — I think it was twenty-one in Baghdad at the time — and we went through and we asked them, "How many civilians died here? How many civilians came in?" It just seemed natural. It was always about hearts and minds, hearts and minds, hearts and minds, and you would talk to civilians, and they would say, "Well, how can they win our hearts and minds? They're killing us. They're killing us at checkpoints, they're killing us in our houses. What hearts and minds are they talking about?"

To me, if we're going to talk about winning hearts and minds, it begins and ends with how many civilians are being killed in the conflict. It just kept manifesting itself in different ways: Iraqi frustration with U.S. presence here, the growth of the insurgency, the growth of terrorism, the development of al Qaeda — there was always a link back to civilian casualties. And then I thought, as an Arabic speaker and someone who can get out a little bit more, that it was a good use of my resources to focus on that, because we could get to that story in a way that most people couldn't.

It was just on a whim one day. I thought that I'd just go to the Ministry of Health and see if they have the statistics. Because the U.S., at the time, said they didn't have them. I thought, "Who

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knows, maybe they're keeping them." And the officials there, they gave us the numbers. I said, "I don't suppose you have, you know, the number of civilians killed. I don't suppose you have this divided by coalition versus noncoalition." They said, "Sure!" And they handed me the sheet, and I thought, "Well, good Lord."

That was in September of 2004. And one thing to point out: at the time, Iraq was pretty well known for its record-keeping. You know, there are some countries where you can't depend on records at all. But there was a real, I don't know, commitment to details, and to records, and to being accurate in the record-keeping. So I felt really comfortable going with their numbers. The Iraqi health ministry is sort of an objective group that has no incentive to taint the numbers one way or the other at the time. I mean these were statisticians, they weren't politicians. So, I felt it was important to import [into an article on civilian casualties published on September 24, 2004] what they had recorded, based on their information. They weren't doing it haphazardly.

I wanted to keep following it, but I've gone back, oh, maybe four or five times since, and they will not release numbers on their records of Iraqis killed by coalition forces. And no one else has ever reported that number. There've been reports of civilians killed, but never that breakdown. Well, [the official at the health ministry] hinted at [why]. He said, "I'm not allowed to release them. I got in trouble, it caused a lot of problems, it went all the way up to the health ministry. You know, the top levels of the government went crazy and were upset about these numbers being released."

Hannah Allam
Knight Ridder (McClatchy)

We haven't been aggressive enough in having our home bases petition the Pentagon and the administration to reveal these [civilian casualty] figures. They keep them, we

know they keep them and we have some partial figures released from time to time or somebody's been leaked something. But I think it's shameful that they have the figures and won't release them.

And I just don't understand why. I'm a firm believer in "the key to p.r. is honesty, honesty, honesty," so why not say, "Look, here they are. War is bloody. There's going to be civilian casualties. Here's what they are. We'll give it to you month to month." And then it wouldn't be this big scary unknown, where you have all these wild speculations that range from hundreds of thousands to a few thousand. And, I think

**Those pictures from
Abu Ghraib, a hundred
years from now, when
the history of the
Middle East is written,
those things will be
part and parcel of what-
ever textbook that
Iraqis and Syrians and
others are writing about
the West. That will
never go away.**

even what they have is not a complete picture, but at least it would be a starting point. And I think it would work to [the military's] advantage because it would be far smaller than some of these estimates that have been put out there.

Patrick Cockburn
The Independent

Iraqis don't keep their money in banks because after the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam closed the banks, and when they reopened, people found that instead of the dinar being, whatever it was, one to three dollars to the dinar, that they were getting two thousand dinars to the dollar. After that they generally kept their money at home, and

in hundred dollar bills. So often Iraqi houses have a surprising amount of cash in them, but this is the total savings of an extended family. Like anywhere else in the world where people keep large sums of money in their house, they are afraid of someone stealing it.

So if you knock on their door at two in the morning, they're likely to answer it, and they're all armed with guns. The U.S. military didn't seem to realize this, so when the door was answered by an Iraqi with a gun, he was often shot dead — totally innocent farmers or businessmen or whatever. This created an enormous outrage at the time.

Larry Kaplow
Cox Newspapers

A country doesn't want to believe that an army they sent overseas, their brothers and sons and fathers, have done bad things. It's very hard to get the home country to accept that fact. And that's not just in America. You see this in other places that have sent armies places. Every time there is a war, a nation goes in here with the whole mythology, and the whole rationale. It's very difficult to work in anything that contradicts the mythology.

Scott Peterson
The Christian Science Monitor
Getty Images

The moment of Abu Ghraib [the photos of abuses were made public in April 2004] reinforced in [the Iraqi] mind all those rumors, all those prejudices — all those concerns that they weren't certain were true but might have been, they now became very, very real. And whether they were real or not, the fact that they were real in Abu Ghraib — that those kind of abuses and those kind of events took place — all of a sudden made, in many Iraqi minds, every single abuse a real thing.

Thomas Dworzak
Magnum Photo

Ask the Pentagon, or ask the military: What harm has photography

brought to the effort in the war? In a way, in a sick way, we're pretty corrupted, by the reality — the bad pictures have been taken by their own people. The shocking pictures have been taken by Lynndie England. She should get the Pulitzer for investigating. That's what brought out the real dirt. It wasn't us, trying to get in while they rough up some Iraqi a little bit. The big iconic pictures questioning the effort in the war on terror, or whatever they call it — these have been taken by their own people. It doesn't need a professional photographer to take a halfway decent picture. The pictures in Abu Ghraib, some of them photographically are very good pictures. No photographer has managed to take a more harmful picture — no professional photographer — has managed to take a more harmful picture than these guys in Abu Ghraib.

Colonel William Darley
Military Review

We have never recovered from the Abu Ghraib thing. And it's likely all the time we're in Iraq, we never will. It will take a decade and beyond. I mean, those pictures, a hundred years from now, when the history of the Middle East is written, those things will be part and parcel of whatever textbook that Iraqis and Syrians and others are writing about the West. Those pictures. It's part of the permanent record. It's like that guy in Vietnam that got his head shot. It's just a permanent part of the history. That will never go away.

Turning Points

Dexter Filkins
The New York Times

I remember the whole period from October, November, December 2003, everybody — all the reporters — were still playing by the old rules and going where we wanted to go. And everybody would come back more and more

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Contact

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and say, "My God, I had something really scary happen today: 'my car got raked by gunfire,' or 'a crowd chased me down,' or 'some guys with masks chased me in a car,'" and so it was clear that the environment was changing, and so we had to respond to that and it took a long time to kind of figure out how to do that.

Rajiv Chandrasekaran
The Washington Post

In early December of 2003, I was driving back from Hillah. A translator, a driver, and I had gone down to do a story on the provincial council there. Each province had its own government council. We talked to the members. On the drive back to Baghdad, we were about half way there and saw what we thought was a big car accident. One of the vehicles was on fire. We saw a couple of bodies on the road. As we're driving by, something caught my eye. I thought, "This is very unusual." Because people were celebrating, were cheering, were very boisterous. I thought, "This is not an accident. This is very strange." So I directed my driver to pull over and my translator and I got out. I kept my notebook in my pocket, and since I'm of a darker complexion, if I don't open my mouth, I'm often mistaken for a dark-skinned guy from Basra. So I just sort of walked through the crowd with my translator. It became clear that those were Spanish intelligence agents and seven of them had been ambushed on their way down to Hillah. Their bodies were sprawled out on the road and they were being mutilated by this mob. We just stumbled upon them.

Andrew Lee Butters
Freelance writer

I could feel things change in February of 2004, although I was slow to pick up on it somewhat. I remember catching a ride back from a dinner in a taxi with Jon Lee Anderson of *The New Yorker*, and someone asked me how things were going, and I said something

about safety, "Ah, it's fine, you can do anything." And Jon Lee Anderson said, "I've never been in a society where something so clearly was on the brink of happening." And I was like, "What's he talking about it?" Sure enough, and not very long afterwards, there were the two uprisings in Fallujah and Ramadi. In some ways you feel like a frog, the proverbial frog in boiling water. The changes are so gradual you don't notice it until suddenly things get really bad.

Luke Baker
Reuters

For Ashura [a Shiite holy day], in March 2004, there probably were about a million people estimated gathered in Karbala. It was the first time that Shiites had celebrated Ashura publicly in Iraq for something like thirty years. On the final day, when the streets of Karbala were the most packed, there was a series of bombings. We were on the streets of Karbala; one bomb went off reasonably close to where we were. Perhaps foolishly we went to it, thinking it was a one-off thing. We were rushing to the site where the bomb had gone off, and another suicide bomber blew himself up between where that bomb had gone off and where we were, probably about thirty feet in front of me, and it just mowed down everyone between me and him. Thirty people were just wiped out in front of myself and the cameraman — a really devastating scene. Then we turned and another bomb went off to our left, doing exactly the same thing to people to our left, and then another bomb went off. I was on the satellite phone trying to call in what was happening, and people then thought that — I was the only foreigner there — I was somehow setting these things off through the satellite phone. They wanted to attack me, but we managed to basically get out of immediate danger.

Alissa Rubin
Los Angeles Times

[In March 2004], people in Fallujah had been laying IEDs [improvised explosive devices], and we knew that a serious assault was coming. We had someone with the Marines, writing about the Marines, and some civilians in Fallujah were killed, and so I felt that we needed to tell the story also from the point of view of the civilian Fallujans. So I went out there to talk to them. And I was in a hospital and a rela-



tive of someone who had just been killed came in and he was very angry that there was a foreigner there, although I was properly dressed in an abaya and a hijab, but he became furious and he pulled out a gun. An Iraqi translator I was working with was there and [the angry man] basically held the gun far closer to his head or my head than either of us ever want to see again.

And Suhail [Rubin's translator] told him, "Calm down, stop it. We didn't mean any harm." That sort

of thing. And he told him that we were trying to explain what had happened to his relative who had been killed. No one offered to help us or pull the man away, and we walked out of the hospital and survived. Although we were very afraid as we walked out that we'd be shot in the back.

Rajiv Chandrasekaran
The Washington Post

I spent more than two weeks with the U.S. Marines in Fallujah in April 2004 during the first Marine incursion into Fallujah, the one that would eventually result in the Marines' pulling out and then bring-

Iraqi Shiites, who had traveled to Karbala to celebrate Ashura for the first time in thirty-five years, mourn the loss of relatives after bombings there killed at least eighty-five Shiites. March 2, 2004. ANDREA BRUCE/THE WASHINGTON POST



ing back a bunch of former Baathist officers called the Fallujah Brigade, which turned out to be a disaster. This was in the spring of 2004.

I was with a Marine battalion in the city. We were camped out in an abandoned soda pop factory. We went out on patrol with these guys. We ate the MREs with them. We were taking incoming fire in the evenings with them. We were in the same degree of danger as them. I was just blown away by how a bunch of eighteen-, nineteen-, twenty-year-old kids, from often very broken homes, inner cities, you name it, how they had come together and were exhibiting what I felt to be very great discipline. We all know there are exceptions to this, but by and large I was just really impressed by their ability to exercise restraint, to have such a disciplined chain of command. The Marines would have to go back in again with greater numbers and greater force in the fall of 2004.

Hannah Allam

Knight Ridder (McClatchy)

I think the beheading of Nicholas Berg [in May 2004 was a turning point]. And then after that it really seemed almost overnight. I guess it was the realization that reporters were not immune as targets. That we were considered foreigners, there was no distinction. That what we are doing here is noble and truth-telling, there was no distinction. A foreigner is a foreigner is a foreigner.

Anthony Shadid

The Washington Post

I think after April 2004, it changed pretty dramatically in all respects. I remember pretty vividly that moment of standing in the street when there was a militiaman manning a checkpoint, wearing a bandolier of bullets, and on a street over there was either a Bradley or a tank, and you got that sense of the street fighting that was talked so much about before the invasion was actually happening at that point.

I had done a story back in 2003 on the village called Thuluyah and I'd gone there quite a few times in

2003. I'd ended up doing a story on a father who'd been forced to kill his son for being an informer for the Americans. And it felt pretty relaxed in 2003 doing those stories. I met the people who had forced the father to kill his son and I met the father himself. I moved pretty casually through the village. And as you move through these villages, you look for people who know everything. You look for the barber, the pharmacist, the people who talk to everybody. I latched on to those people early on, I latched on to the pharmacist, and he really made it

And then he's asking, 'What's wrong with him? He's not praying. Why?' 'Because he's not a Muslim.' And then he's just kind of naturally saying, 'Why don't we kill him?' The way you would say, 'Oh, why don't you have a cup of tea?'

easy, getting around the village, talking to people.

[In 2005] I wanted to go back because I was trying to do a story on what life with the insurgents, you know, what life in liberated Iraq was like. I thought this would be a good village because it very much was off limits at this point. The Americans just didn't go in there and, when they did, there was fighting. And I spent three days in Balad, trying to set up some sort of guarantee.

I had met some doctors at the hospital in Balad from this town, on another trip a couple of months earlier. And they had said at that time that they thought they could get me into this village. And so I went and talked to them. On the first day, they said, "Let us make

some more calls." And I went the second day — it's not that safe of a drive from Baghdad to Balad — and they said, "You know, give us one more day." And on the third day I went back, and two of the doctors said they couldn't guarantee my security and the third doctor said he could.

And I thought about it, and I thought, if I were ten years younger and desperate for the story I would have done it. But you think, two out of three isn't great odds. It just kind of hit me that this is an important story, and it's a story about where Iraq is headed and where it's been. And it just wasn't possible.

Dan Murphy

The Christian Science Monitor

Probably the way Fallujah was leveled [in November 2004] was not as well reported or understood as it could have been. But press had great access to that story. They were there. They were banging away with the Marines, so they saw a lot. And there was an incredible amount of destruction in that city. And you have to remember you didn't have to be in Fallujah to cover the Iraqi side of the story. There were a lot of refugees that fled Fallujah and came to a refugee camp right up the road from where I'm staying. Of course, the people who ran that refugee camp took to kidnapping foreign reporters who wanted to talk about the situations those families found themselves in. So that story got a lot less coverage as time went on because they were shooting the messenger. But you know we did a couple of stories about them. We tried.

Elizabeth Palmer

CBS News

In the battle of Fallujah, it was one of the first times the Iraqi forces, the newly trained Iraqi forces, were deployed with the American soldiers. Two of these new Iraqi special forces soldiers were given to our unit, and the officers who were concentrating on the battle made absolutely no effort to integrate them, to give them the



Iraqi corpses lie in a hospital morgue in Sadr City after the Mahdi army, a militia loyal to the Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, clashed with U.S. forces when the militia attempted to take control of government buildings and police stations in the Baghdad neighborhood. April 5, 2004. STEFAN ZAKLIN/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

equipment they needed; they didn't even have body armor; they didn't have sleeping bags. There was no understanding that these guys, these Iraqis, would be their best allies in the field, that it was important to find out where they were from, whether they were Shia or Sunni, and what their unit was. I was able to write some of this for the Web page, but it never made it into mainstream television news because that needed to be the headline, the big story of the day. This is more peripheral stuff that's softer — very telling — but certainly not hard.

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad
The Guardian, Getty Images

I remember that day in Fallujah [when I was embedded with insurgents, in November 2004]. It's raining. The night before the town was

bombed — it was a really rough night — we didn't sleep. And in the morning I was sitting in this yard outside the house we were staying in, and there was this Yemeni guy, and he was a normal guy, he is a guy that you would meet everywhere. And this guy was cleaning his weapons. I was sitting next to him, taking a couple shots of him cleaning his weapons, taking pictures, and it was raining.

And then the guy started talking, and he was telling his story, how he grew up and why he came to Iraq. And this guy was part of one of the Arab jihadis coming from all over the world, coming to Iraq, coming to fight in Fallujah. I felt so weird. It wasn't my first experience with insurgents but it was as if someone just opened a door, and suddenly I was on the other side. And I was seeing what was

happening. The guy was telling me his story, he kept talking and I was taking notes and writing. And I was so overwhelmed by what I was hearing, not because it's an amazing story — it's just the story of this Yemeni man and how he came to Syria and was smuggled across Iraq, it's the same story that we all knew, how jihadis were coming — but it was on a personal level, it was him talking about his family back in Yemen, him saying goodbye to his little daughter without telling her that he was going to Iraq to die, the personal level of the story. And that was just like really weird and amazing to understand the personal background of those people and why they were there fighting.

Of course, there were these moments when they went to pray and they asked me to go and pray, and



Above: A Stryker maneuvers on a test-fire range outside Mosul, part of the reinforcement of heavy armored vehicles ordered by the U.S. military to increase security in Mosul ahead of the election. January 2, 2005.

Right: In Baghdad, an Iraqi policeman guards the body of a murder victim. The man was apparently hung from a balcony by a rope tied around his foot and then dropped to his death. June 11, 2004.

STEFAN ZAKLIN/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

I said, "No, no thank you, I don't pray," and they were trying to tell me why I should pray. And then this other guy comes, and he listens to this whole conversation and of people preaching to me and trying to convince me to pray. And then he's asking, "What's wrong with him?" and they're saying, "He's not praying." "Why?" "Because he's not a Muslim." And then he's just kind of naturally saying, "Why don't we kill him?" the same way you would say, "Oh, why don't you have a cup of tea? Why don't you kill that fly on your shoulder?" He is just asking, "Why don't we kill him?" and they are saying, "No, no, no, we are in a kind of truce with him. We can't kill him because we gave him the truce, we gave him permission to stay with us." And it's just these little moments where you leave Fal-lujah, and like two years after Fal-lujah you are thinking, "What was I thinking?" And I was like "Fucking hell, what did I do to myself?" I was like sitting with those guys, and "Why don't we kill him?"

The Embeds

Dan Murphy

The Christian Science Monitor

Embedding is a fancy word for letting journalists go see what the military units do, although that was much more wide open in the Vietnam War, although that was much more of an anomaly of American history. It was much more locked down in the first gulf war, clearly. And now there is a bit of bureaucracy you have to go through and sometimes [the military] wants to steer you in some direction or another direction, but in general, in my personal experience — I guess I've probably done, maybe five embeds — I've always learned new things and I've always gotten great access to intelligence guys who'll give you off-the-record briefings in the area and talk about what their points of concern are as well as what they think is going well. I've always found it fascinating. I consider it an incredible privilege in many

ways to go out and see what these guys do. Unless you are a soldier yourself, very few people ever get to see infantrymen in combat. I'm into that and feel very privileged to do it. The only limitation is you are going where they want to go, on their schedules. You are not going to get all the access you want or be able to do all you want. And you are not going to get to talk to Iraqis when you do this.

Colonel William Darley
Military Review

Well, embedding is a tremendous thing for public affairs officers. Every embed is a straw. You're seeing the war through a straw. So it's a good thing for the military. The more straws you can get out there, the more coverage, I think, the better. The military's not going to succeed unless it has political — and certainly in connection with that — public support. If you don't have political support, if you don't have public support — the translation of political support — the military can't succeed.

Patrick Cockburn
The Independent

I think it's a great mistake to go with American units and report on any Iraqi city because I think it's in the nature of things that you're not actually meeting local people, and if you are, you aren't meeting them in circumstances in which they can actually speak.

Tom Lasseter
Knight Ridder (McClatchy)

To me, not embedding is like not going to a mosque. I can't imagine going to Iraq without spending the time I've spent in mosques there. And I can't imagine having gone to Iraq without spending the time that I've spent embedding.

Mitch Prothero
United Press International

Let's say a civilian Iraqi car gets shot up at a checkpoint. Obviously this is a huge tragedy, but is it a crime? Well, if you're never been embedded you're not going to understand the procedure, you're not going to understand the mentality, and you're not going to understand that gut fear that you have when you're sitting in Humvees and the car doesn't stop, for whatever reason, whether it's because they're a suicide bomber or be-

cause it's a confused, panicked Iraqi guy. If you want to cover the stuff, you have to know what that feels like before you do anybody justice, whether you're trying to do justice to the Iraqis or to the Americans.

Nir Rosen
Freelance writer

The two weeks [in October 2003] that I was [embedded with the Army] I saw many things that broke my heart and made me angry, and there have been journalists who have been embedded for many, many months during the occupation throughout areas where there are a lot of operations, so they must have seen so many more things than I did. Each time [the soldiers] go on a raid they break down the walls in front of the house; they break down the door, they drag the men out — it's a very violent, horrifying thing. And usually these are large families. So in the middle of the night you have these huge Martian-looking soldiers breaking into the house when you're asleep, dragging your father out, stowing all the women to one side, not really speaking your language, pointing guns at you, stomping all over your house in their boots, and

they've just learned that it's not even the right house. In my experience, they arrested hundreds more men than they were looking for. They basically arrested all the men. At some point they arrested all the men in the town, it seemed, that were fighting age.

Vivienne Walt
Freelance writer

I was on patrol one night [in March 2004] with a platoon [from the First Armored Cavalry Division], and we were in the town of Abu Ghraib, which is next to the prison of Abu Ghraib. And the platoon, towards dawn — they'd spent all night kind of dragging people out of bed, looking for weapons, and it was unclear what they were looking for. It was just kind of an all-night raid on this town, and the platoon leader turned out to be kind of antiwar in general. All night [he] was saying to me, "I don't know why the fuck we're here." You know, that was his big line. "What the hell are we here for? I don't know why the fuck we're here. They actually thought Saddam had weapons of mass destruction here — give me a break, what a joke." You know, I was writing in my notebook all the time, and he didn't care — and it was, I thought, a very important piece of the story, that not all U.S. soldiers are gung-ho about the war. And it got toward dawn and they decided to do one last raid on one last house, and they get to this big metal gate. The gate is padlocked and there's this little dog yapping away, and it's like four in the morning, the whole town is asleep, and the sergeant of the platoon goes nuts — he's exhausted and crabby and starts screaming, "Shut the fucking dog up!" you know, and then finally, he pushed at the gates, he pushed the chain open a few inches and put his rifle through and fired a shot and mortally wounded this dog.

So then they shoot open the lock and the dog's lying there bleeding and the platoon leader, who was the one who was some-



what antiwar, and who also turned out to be a big dog-lover, went completely nuts. You know the dog was like in terrible, terrible pain, and so he leaned over and basically delivered a mercy shot to this dog, by which time the owner of the house has come out and is sort of standing there in shock, and there were twenty armed American soldiers standing in his front yard and his dog was dead. So the whole thing was just a total mess, and then the platoon leader started shouting, "Why the hell did you shoot the dog, are you nuts?" and the other guy said, "It's none of your business." They actually took their helmets off and they laid into each other, physically. And then the other soldiers separated them.

We got back to the base at breakfast time, and I wrote an account of what had happened that night — the whole night was sort of interesting — which then wound up being a front-page lead story in *The Boston Globe*, as a result of which, this guy, who was the platoon leader, was court-martialed [it was eventually dropped after he resigned his commission]. So, the whole thing turned out to be a big incident from what had really been somewhat of a minor, passing incident in the greater scheme of things. Some of my colleagues sort of said, actually did say to me, "Oh, you might have kind of damaged our relations with this platoon." And in fact I then subsequently went back to see the platoon, just to make sure I hadn't damaged anybody's relationship. And it didn't seem like I had.

Jane Arraf
CNN

A story of Samarra again, with the military, embedded, that they had facilitated, where we went to the hospital and, lo and behold, there are women and children who are dead. We are able to do a story, at this morgue at this hospital, with pictures showing, that yes, there were civilian casualties. Not only did the military allow us to do that,

they also took us to the cemetery, where they dropped us off some distance and again handed us over to Iraqi soldiers and we watched them bury their dead. Some of the soldiers complained, but there was no fallout because I'd explained to the commanders what I was doing. I had been upfront, I wasn't pretending I'd seen anything else. The best of them, the thing they demand from you is that you are fair and you are accurate.

One story I was able to do while embedded — again facilitated by the military — was this story on this extraordinary man whose entire family was killed by U.S. soldiers. They fired on him. It's a long way of saying, being embedded is not to have blinders on.

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad
The Guardian, Getty Images

I had spent two weeks on an embed, and then I went out in a raid, and one of the soldiers in the raid realized that I speak Arabic, because I was trying to translate what an old woman was trying to tell him. And I had like a nice, good relationship with those guys because I was with them for, I don't know, a week with that specific unit, and I built up a relationship with the guys. We were joking, chatting, but the moment they realized that I spoke the language, this whole trust disappeared and there was a huge wall put up between us.

Colonel William Darley
Military Review

I only know of one reporter, one embed, that was briefly expelled. It was someone from *The Wall Street Journal*. It was a disagreement about what was on or off the record. That's the only incident I know. I know lots of reporters that have written pretty damning reports from what they objectively believe they found. That other guy from *The Wall Street Journal*, Greg Jaffe, he wrote a scathing article with regard to Iraqi training and the success of Iraqi soldiers with the Eighty-second Airborne Division.

It was really a downer. Nobody took any retribution against him. He's still welcome back. He's still invited back because he's known to be a straight shooter. On balance, we have a pretty mature group of colonels and generals who recognize that if there's a turd in the bowl, and somebody reports the turd, well, that's the price of doing business with an embed.

Chris Hondros
Getty Images

By and large, the embed program — three and a half years into it — is still remarkably important, and



while it has had problems here and there — there have been cases of soldiers confiscating someone's sat [satellite] phone, taking media cards to prevent pictures from going out — so much has come out, so much of our understanding of Iraq has come from embeds. I mean, my God, the battle of Fallujah — that was one hundred percent covered by sixty, seventy journalists embedded with the U.S. military. We think we don't know anything about Iraq now. Man, if we didn't have embeds, we wouldn't know anything about Iraq! And the notion that

you sort of start identifying with troops and stuff like that when you're relying on them for your security, well that's true to some extent, but again, in ways that are true for any journalist covering anything.

Luckily for journalists, the military is not nearly as organized or centralized as people would like to think. In November 2003, there

was a French photographer who was doing a sort of embed with insurgents. And he would claim that he never knew where he was going to go, and one day [the insurgents] said, "Okay, come with us, we're gonna go someplace," and he goes with them and they pull out to a field by the airport and whip out a big missile, a missile-launching tube, and they said,

Marines detain an Iraqi in Husaybah, a town on the Syrian border, during Operation Steel Curtain, an attempt to stem the flow of foreign fighters coming into Iraq from Syria. November 6, 2005. YURI KOZYREV



"Yeah, we're going to shoot down an airplane." And he's sitting there thinking, he says, "Oh my God, what can I do?" And he was worried that they would just kill him. So he had no choice. So he photographs them setting up and then you see the guy — there's a picture of the missile coming out of the tube, and then a picture of the plane getting hit in the sky — it was a cargo plane, a DHL cargo plane taking off from Baghdad airport — and the flames bursting out of the wings. On a side note, three very talented pilots actually managed to land that plane with only one engine — on fire — and they were okay.

And then he had them celebrating in the fields and all that. And then he went back, and was in a bit of a daze, and he sent the pictures to his agency, who distributed them and they ran all over magazines. *Newsweek International* ran them; European and Asian *Newsweek* ran them as a big double spread. The military saw them — the U.S. military — and was furious that a western journalist was with insurgents who are shooting down coalition aircrafts. Who is this guy? The military was literally looking to arrest him and bring him in to question him. So this guy basically got in a car and took off, and went on the road to Jordan and escaped from Baghdad.

Okay, that was October 2003, around there. By around fall 2004, I come back, and there was this photographer hanging out in our office. "What you been up to?" "Oh, I was doing an embed on Haifa Street," which is in downtown — a U.S. military-patrolled street in downtown Baghdad that saw a lot of action. When you were embedded in Haifa Street, you didn't have to actually stay with them on their base. You could just drive up there, go embed, and then come back and stay in the hotel at night. Anyway, he was doing *embeds*! This guy, who a year before had the entire U.S. military looking for him, was doing embeds in Baghdad!

Anthony Shadid *The Washington Post*

I've heard stories about articles being graded according to certain colors whether they're favorable or not, favorable or neutral. I think there's a certain abuse going on within the embedding system at this point. I think this is something we need to be writing about.

And more and more, we're becoming combatants. As reporters, we're losing this noncombatant status. And it was much different — I remember back in Afghanistan in 1997, there was no question I was off limits. Even hanging out with the Taliban fighters outside Kabul, you were off limits. Just in ten years that I've been doing this, I think it's dramatic how much more we're considered combatants. And it's not just insurgents in Iraq, but I think also the U.S. military. I think we're only looking at it in its embryonic form, but if you look ten, fifteen years down the road, there might be a sense that reporters are either embedded and therefore legitimate or unembedded and therefore illegitimate.

Patrick Cockburn *The Independent*

In November 2004 the U.S. Marines surrounded and captured Fallujah. Many foreign journalists were embedded with the Marines and reported on this and it was well reported; there were excellent reports from many people. But it was also presented as a victory, which is reasonable enough, but then also presented as a victory which showed that insurgents were on the run. Now, it so happens I know Mosul quite well. The population of Fallujah is 350,000 max; Mosul is about 1.7 million, so it's a much bigger city. Now, the attack on Fallujah was on 7 November 2004. Four days later, on 11 November, the insurgents attacked Mosul and captured it. They captured thirty police stations: the entire police force either defected or went home. One brigade of the

Iraqi Army also evaporated. This was a major defeat, which happened at the same time. Now nobody was embedded with the U.S. forces and nobody really reported it. There were a few scattered reports but it made no impact abroad, but this is extremely significant because it showed that what-



A U.S. Army captain lies dead on the kitchen floor of a house in Fallujah that had been used as a base by insurgents. He was shot by insurgents as he entered. (This photo did not appear in any mainstream U.S. newspapers except in a handful of stories about self-censorship.) November 13, 2004.
STEFAN ZAKLIN/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY





Iraqi National Guard soldiers remove the bodies of four murdered men found in a cemetery in Mosul. In late November 2004, there was a rash of killings in Mosul, where victims were believed to have been supporters of Iraq's interim government. November 28, 2004. AP WIDE WORLD/JIM MACMILLAN

ever had happened in Fallujah, the insurgents were still powerful and capable of taking a large city.

Anne Barnard
The Boston Globe

From the very beginning, in April 2003, I had regularly gone out to Fallujah and met people there. I went into Fallujah again, right after the battle [in November 2004] with a civil-affairs team that was trying to put the city back together. And it was sort of a scary reenactment of the original Iraq invasion, a microcosm of the Iraq invasion. Here were civil-affairs teams that were going in, and they were supposed to rebuild the whole city, but they hadn't been given any plans, any blueprints, any understanding of which ministries were responsible for what. And these were Marines

who were suddenly supposed to make the banking system work and the plumbing system work and the water system. It already looked like a recipe for disaster, so I went back later and I tried to write in a textured way about what they'd achieved and what they were not achieving, but that was only two or three months after the battle was over, and that was the last time I personally was there.

So when I watched the coverage — and this goes back to the limitations of embeds — you can see that people are going on embeds to Fallujah, for say a week, and people are writing, "Fallujah is suddenly much better now than a couple months ago," and then another article will say, "Fallujah, it's a real disappointment," and it almost depends on what that person's

benchmark is. You can almost tell from the story whether the person — or at least it raises the question when you read the story: Was this person in Fallujah before Fallujah became an insurgent stronghold? Was this person in Fallujah before the first aborted invasion attempt? Was this person in Fallujah during the battle? Was this person in Fallujah immediately after the battle? Are they with soldiers who just arrived? Or with soldiers who just left? Or are they with soldiers who know that they are near the end of their tour, soldiers who came in with these high hopes for how much they were going to achieve and it hasn't been nearly achieved, and now they're leaving.

That's a limitation of embedding — that you're seeing a snapshot of a place. A snapshot of the military

and how it operates. You know, I find it very instructive if you spend time with a unit when they first arrive to their area of operations — you should also go back and spend time with them at the end, and see whether they're still saying "our AO [area of operations] is one of the most successful ones in Iraq." I don't mean to sound flippant, but these guys often come in saying that they've heard a lot about the problems but in this area the people really want to work with us, they really want to make a fresh start. And you don't want to be mean, but you say, "Well, you guys, I've been here and I've been with a lot of units and they all talk like you when they first arrive."

Anne Garrels
NPR

I was assigned to a battalion of marines and to a platoon that went in on foot, and it was, without doubt, the scariest thing I've ever done; the night before I wasn't sure I was going to be able to do it. It meant carrying fifty pounds on my back, and the marines clearly didn't want me, an old woman, and they didn't know what public radio was, for starters. If they were gonna have a correspondent, they wanted a guy from Fox. They did not want a fifty-four-year-old woman from NPR, about which they knew nothing. And all of us were scared the night before; this was really — we were much more exposed than I think we had ever dreamed.

And I still have nightmares, truth be told; posttraumatic, whatever you wanna call it. It doesn't come in direct ways, it comes in weird ways. After I got home, some kids were celebrating down at the lake just a few hundred yards from here, and they set off fireworks and I found myself curled up, just sobbing. I went skiing — and I'd been to this place in Utah a million times, and there are avalanche dangers and they blow the mountain to precipitate avalanches, and I've seen this for twenty years. Well, they did it this year and the next thing I know I'm in the arms of my

stepdaughter sobbing my guts out. I don't have, I don't regularly have nightmares — it just comes in odd ways, subtle ways. Anger — all of us — I know I've had anger issues; they're hard to describe.

We were hit by RPGs [rocket-propelled grenades] walking through the streets, and kids were killed or injured on either side of me, you didn't have time at the time to reflect on it. It's only sort of later that you just go, "Jesus Christ," and I know from talking to the others, there were a handful of us who were in this sort of similar situation, basically on the ground with foot patrols, and I — just speaking for myself — will never do it again.

Reporting in Iraq

Nir Rosen
Freelance writer

I met a young Iraqi guy [in April 2003], college student, secular Shia guy, very street-smart, from a poor family, who became a very close friend of mine and sort of trained me how to be Iraqi — taught me the Iraqi dialect, taught me things I needed to know to fit in in the mosques, fit in on the Iraqi streets. I sort of joined a local gym, mostly Shia neighborhood kids who worked out under horrible conditions. They were lifting bricks. But it was a great opportunity to mix with young men and hang out with them, go to restaurants with them, and because I was their age and I was into exercising, I got to get into the world of young Iraqi men. I never really made contact with young Iraqi women — I think that was mostly impossible. I think most did [know that I am an American], but I stressed the Iranian side of my ethnicity.

Richard Engel
NBC News

[My Arabic is] a little confused now. By now it's become fairly Iraqi, because I've spent a lot of time. Most of the people I speak to now in Arabic are in Iraq. So it's become confusing; if I'm

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
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speaking to someone on the phone, they won't know where I'm from. They'll be confused. They'll know that I'm not Iraqi, but they don't really know. Who's this guy? Is he a Lebanese guy? Is he a Syrian guy? Who is this person? It's confusing. So, that can also be to my advantage. It's not just speaking Arabic, it's the gestures, it's the religious references, it's the sense of humor, it's the old — we can talk about movies, old Egyptian movies that we've both seen. When they're talking about some sort of Egyptian pop star I know who they're talking about, so it's not just the language, it's knowing the culture and their terms of reference.

Dexter Filkins
The New York Times

People will say, "If you print my name I'll be killed," and you know you have to believe that 'cause it happens all the time. It doesn't happen as much as you would think. It's remarkable how even now you can find people who will speak their minds.

Jane Arraf
CNN

[One day] the [Iraqi] police came out and they were dragging a suspect out of the car and they started kicking him in the head in front of our cameras and they saw our camera and they just kicked him harder [laughs]. And I said, "Do you really have to kick this guy?" They just kept kicking him. The soldiers came up to us, American soldiers, and tried to take away the tape. That is their automatic reaction — not of senior people but of police and soldiers. We wouldn't give up the tape and we held on to it and after a while we talked to a commanding general who said, "Please don't run that."

I explained that if it happens in front of you and the camera is rolling, I'm really sorry, but that is not negotiable. But what I would do is put it in context, which I did. The context I put it in was that these are Iraqi soldiers and this is the way —

on this day in this police station — they were treating suspects that they thought were responsible for killing police officers. This doesn't happen everywhere, but on this day it did. And he was okay with that. And that's the way a lot of them are, and that's why you develop relationships where there is mutual trust. Because at the end of the day when you explain it to them, they get it. They understand that it's not going to do them much good if you agree not to show something because it actually did happen.

Luke Baker
Reuters

I frequently went up to Tikrit in the hunt for Saddam. I did it for weeks at a time, embedding with U.S. troops, because everyone had a sense that if he was going to be caught, he was going to be caught around there. It was a pilgrimage for journalists to go up there, and I did it a lot. And I left there, I think I left the tenth of December 2003. I was due to go on holiday, and there were three of us who went on holiday the same day: the bureau chief, myself, and another guy who was helping out. I was flying to Rome, and the other two guys were flying to London. I landed in Rome and had twenty-six messages on my cell phone. I thought, "That's odd, what's going on?" I got the first one and it was my mother telling me that Saddam had been caught, and I thought, "Good God, I had to find out from my mother that Saddam had been caught. I've just been six weeks with the American military trying to track the guy down."

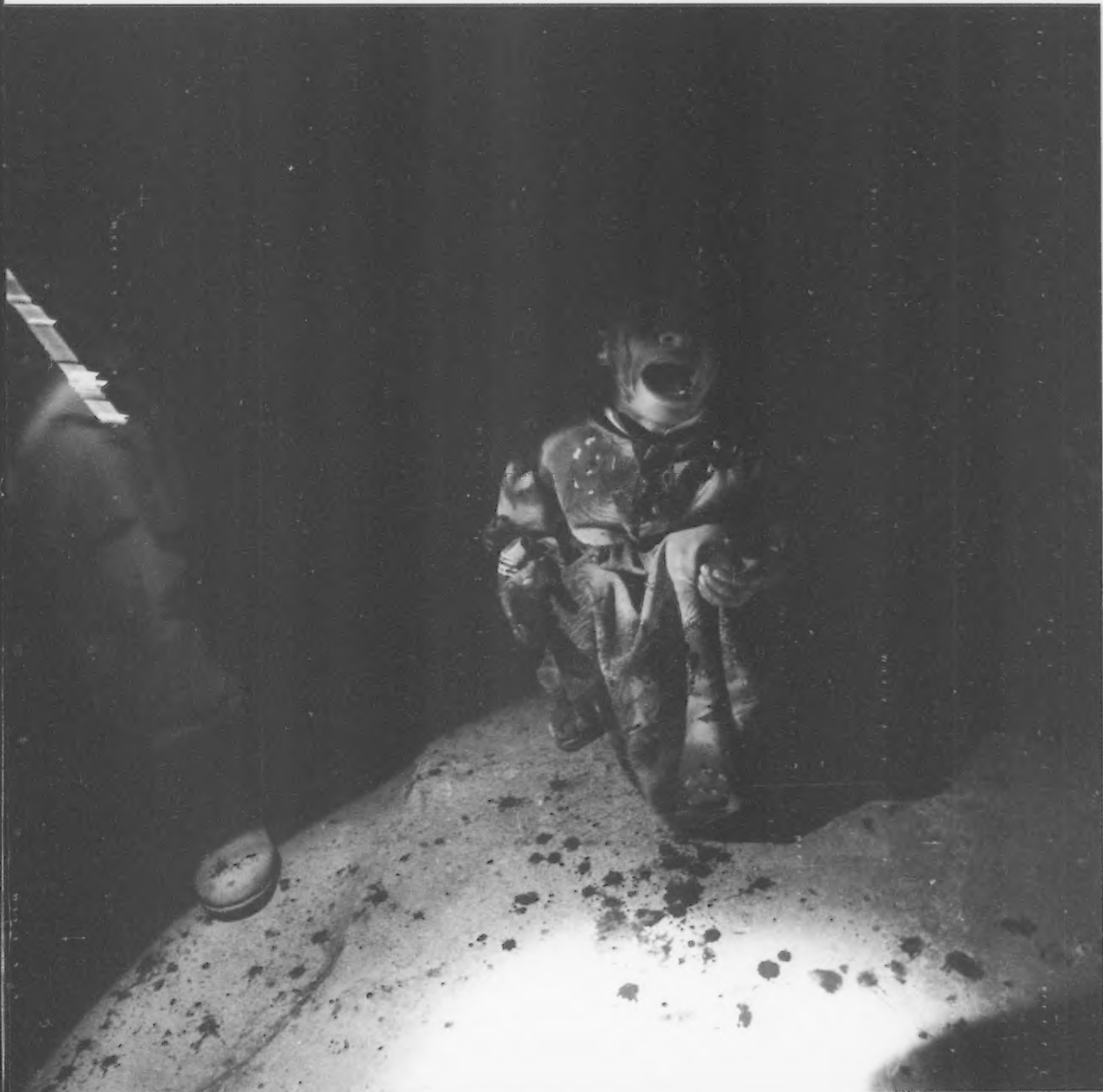
Rajiv Chandrasekaran
The Washington Post

It became clear that you didn't want to go to some of these places after dark. Even with that, you still got around pretty well through the summer of 2003 and into the fall of 2003. After, it became evident that a lot of contractors were driving around in Jeep Cherokees that looked like ours, I took one and then the sec-

ond of four SUVs to Sadr City and did the Baghdad equivalent of Pimp My Ride. For sixty bucks, I had it sandblasted and had it painted to look like an Iraqi taxi cab. The really nice paint job on this \$90,000 vehicle was stripped off and it was made to look like a ghetto mobile, like a Shiite ghetto mobile from Sadr City.



Five-year-old Samar Hassan screams after her parents were killed by U.S. soldiers in Tal Afar. Soldiers with the Twenty-fifth Infantry Division fired on the Hassan family car as it unwittingly approached them during a dusk patrol. Her brother was paralyzed from the waist down and was later treated in the U.S. January 18, 2005. (The photographer's account is on page seventy-four.) CHRIS HONDROS/GETTY IMAGES



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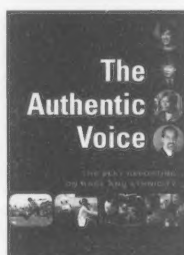
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There came a point through the fall of 2003 when you would stop identifying yourself to strangers as a journalist, as an American journalist. I went through a phase where I would say, I'm an Indian journalist, because I'm of Indian descent even though I was born and raised in California. I used that line, particularly in Fallujah quite a bit. If you were just doing a brief man-on-the-street interview, it was never a big deal. If I were actually sitting down with somebody and doing something substantive, I obviously had to let on who I was. Again, that was also before we learned that the insurgents started using Google to Google people they had captured and figure out who they were.

Farnaz Fassihi*The Wall Street Journal*

It was on the road to Kirkuk, to Baghdad. The driver said they were kidnappers. And I looked over at this car, right next to me. With five men, with AK-47s out, like, right next to me. This was the summer after the invasion. Right at the beginning. They were shooting. We were flying. That's how fast we were going. We were going really fast. We were in a better car than they were. We were like — hit the ground. We sort of blocked each other's bodies [on the floor of the car]. I don't know how long. But we essentially outraced them. Our car [was] a BMW; I think it was a four-wheel drive. [And the men were in] a white Toyota, I remember. There were like five men. It was very scary. We didn't have a guard; we didn't have a chase car. I kept thinking, "This is it. They're going to kill us. Take the car. Or kidnap us." Or, as a woman, you're always very aware of rape. Your mind is racing, like, "I can't do this." I just remember thinking, "Oh, my God, this is it."

Christopher Allbritton

Freelance writer

Well, by August [2004] it was very difficult to travel outside of Baghdad, although it wasn't impossible.

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What we did was we left early in the morning on the day that I went down to Najaf. I pretended to be asleep in the back seat. We had to go through the so-called triangle of death. They were well known to be insurgent towns. We needed to keep a very low profile but the traffic was always really bad going through this little stretch — I just lay down in the back with a kafiya over my face like I was asleep. And we made it through okay. And once we got to Najaf I felt more endangered by Najaf police than by the Mahdi army. The Mahdi army treated me with respect — I'm sure they knew I was an American even though I told them I was Canadian. They all kind of had this look on their face like, "Yeah, Canadian. Whatever you say, buddy."

Liz Sly
Chicago Tribune

Probably in the fall of 2004 when the kidnapping started, it became very necessary not to be publicly identified on the streets as a foreigner. I wear a scarf, I wear Iraqi-style clothing. I don't go with the whole abaya [the traditional full-body garment for Islamic women] because I don't walk like I'm an Iraqi that's in an abaya. I'm not that kind of person, but my coloring is very dark and people mistake me for an Iraqi frequently. And if I am your sort of average working woman in Iraqi clothes — that means skirts down to the ankle, a baggy jacket that's long and comes down below your butt, and a plain scarf — people don't give me a second glance. You never talk English on the street; you never take a phone call on the street. For women, in some ways there's a little advantage, because if you are a woman walking with a man, another man, a strange man won't look at her; he can't give her a second glance because it's just not done. The assumption is this woman is the wife of the guy she is walking with, and you don't look at other people's wives or sisters. At the same time, women don't look around. Women don't

catch men's eyes; women keep their eyes on the pavement ahead of them, and walk modestly. And one of the things I've had to learn to do is curb my natural curiosity and instinct to look around me when I'm walking along, which inhibits a little bit of what you can absorb of the scene you're in, which is limiting. My Iraqi staff would say to me, "Stop moving your head, stop looking around!"

Yousif Mohamed Basil
Translator
Time (CNN)

When I want to get from home to my place of work, I'll walk a long distance from my house just not to take a taxi in front of my house. Then I take a taxi, and when I come to the neighborhood where my place of work is, I'll walk from the place where the taxi dropped me for a long distance until I get to the job. Because it's very dangerous to just take off from the taxi in front of your place of work because probably the taxi driver is

from your neighborhood or is from a certain group and he might say something bad about you.

Borzou Daragahi
Los Angeles Times

Another strategy I have is I'll go to the scene of the car bombing and I'll collect cell-phone numbers from people there and then quickly go, within like ten or fifteen minutes, and then call them and get their accounts as I'm driving back.

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad
The Guardian, Getty Images

Well, you have extra breathing space as an Iraqi, you speak the language, you speak the accent, everything's fine. So as long as you are traveling in your car, you're fine, as long as you are walking in the streets, you're fine. The moment you carry a camera out, the moment you pull out a notebook, the moment you stay and show that you are a journalist, all the breathing space you can have as an Iraqi disappears and you become a jour-

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nalist. And maybe for a westerner they will have the privilege of being kidnapped for two, three months, while an Iraqi will just be killed and considered a collaborator or a spy. So the two inches of breathing space is very useful for doing your research, but the moment you want to shoot [a photo], or the moment you want to do your actual story, you fall under the category of journalist, who are all targets. And being in Iraq for a long period of time, and going around the street and covering the events, people know you as a journalist, so you have this profile as a journalist. And once you go somewhere else — "Oh, here is the journalist" — and again, you lose your two inches of breathing space.

Hannah Allam

Knight Ridder (McClatchy)

Yasser [Salihi, a stringer] was an amazing journalist, a very dear friend. He was beloved by every single reporter who came in and we got to a point where we had competing demands where, "If I'm coming, I'm working with Yasser." Everybody wanted to work with him because he's just this bright spot. He was wonderful, talented, fair, committed, just every adjective you can think of, a great guy. And he and I had been in insurgent-controlled Fallujah together. He and I had gone there a lot together. I mean, just the most crazy harebrained dangerous things you can think of. And then [in November 2004], he was killed on his day off.

He was in his neighborhood, and it is predominantly a Sunni neighborhood. It's known for being fairly anti-American, lot of attacks there. And he was just on his way to buy some gas to take his little daughter to the swimming pool, like he'd promised her for a long time, and he drove too close to a U.S. checkpoint that was unmarked and not a usual checkpoint — it was one of those that would spring up overnight — and he was shot once by a U.S. sniper. He was shot in the head.

Alissa Rubin

Los Angeles Times

For senior reporters who have worked in war zones, there's a kind of, you know, checklist of things you need to know, and we're much more attuned to what those are. And the editors are, too: Well, do you know that you can go there? Has anyone else gone there yet? Was there fighting there recently? Have there been kidnappings? Are other news organizations using armored cars? Do you want to use local guards? How many local guards do you think you'd need? Not traveling with local guards in the same car you're in, so you know, if shooting starts, they're not shooting out of your car and people aren't shooting into your car. I mean, these become second nature.

Patrick Cockburn

The Independent

One has to spend an enormous amount of time thinking about one's own security, but often doing very boring things, like making sure that the driver's checked the tires properly, or where did they get the gasoline from, because a lot of black-market gasoline is watered down. It's extremely dangerous for the car to break down in some neighborhood of Baghdad and it could be fatal. There are a lot of very boring things that could happen that one should really check about and often journalists don't.

James Hider

The Times

By early 2005 — as you know I've got brown hair — by this time I had dyed my hair and eyebrows black, as an attempt to look slightly less foreign. I just did it myself. It was a disaster — my hair turned blue so I had to do it again. I looked like a complete freak. Then once I got it right, I looked like a very sick Kurdish person who was having a rough time, which, you know, lots of Iraqis don't look in great shape either. It

really worked quite well. I mean, some people actually spoke to me in Arabic when I had black hair. I felt like I looked like Roy Orbison's ghost, but people would ask me stuff in Arabic.

I started to get some Iraqi clothes, some horrible nylon clothes and some jeans that came practically up to my chest, and cheap Iraqi shoes. I stopped carrying my stuff in a western-style bag. I put my stuff in a plastic bag with a Coke bottle, and had my tape



recorder and my note pad in there. Eventually I developed this whole thing so that I could get around. If we got caught in traffic I'd hold up an Iraqi newspaper and pretend I was reading it so that nobody could see my face.

And I remember one time, I was in the car, and I was sitting in the back and the driver was up in front. We stopped at a junction quite close to a hotel. And there was this little girl hawking sweets in the street, and I was talking to

my driver at the moment she stuck her head in my window. We were talking in English, and she rushed to the car behind and started shouting, "Amreeki, Amreeki," and I don't know if she was told to do that if something happened or if she was just freaked out by for-

eigners. Luckily, the car behind was my chase car, and so Yasser, who is my chase-car driver, got on the walkie-talkie to my driver and said, "This girl is telling everyone that you're American, get out of there quickly." So my driver just jumped the junction and we got

Terror suspects, detained in an early morning raid in Tal Afar, about to be transported to a local detention center. June 7, 2005.

CHRISTOPH BANGERT





Marines detain an Iraqi during a midnight raid outside Fallujah. June 24, 2005.
CHRIS HONDROS/GETTY IMAGES

back. But it was one of those things where you think, "God, everyone's watching." You know you could be tricked into being revealed for who you are by some six-year-old girl who's selling candy in the street. And so you just have to be so careful, and even with disguises it's still incredibly dangerous, and you know, it's getting worse.

Christopher Allbritton
Freelance writer

I was still going out probably until midsummer 2005. I cut back on it, but I was still going out. By the middle of summer 2005 I would go out rarely and it was only to go to set interviews. Because I cannot pass at all; I don't speak Arabic, I don't look Arabic. If anyone sees me they're going to obviously tell I was a foreigner so I had to curtail my movements. By fall 2005 it was embeds and just going to govern-

ment offices. I couldn't get out. I couldn't go to the market. I couldn't go get a feel for the city. I couldn't really breathe the story anymore of what was happening to Iraqis. And at that time I decided if I can't do this then there really is no point in being here. I didn't want to keep sending Iraqi stringers and keep doing this by remote control. I went back and forth because I was really committed to the story.

Thanassis Cambanis
The Boston Globe

As it became more and more constricted, more and more of the reporting has become the product of our Iraqi colleagues, and in a lot of places it really is an equal-colleague relationship. Newspapers are functioning in much the same manner as a wire-service bureau in terms of how they work. Outside of Baghdad you have a network of

stringers who phone in reports and check things that you hear.

Ali Fadhil
Translator, reporter

My background is I'm a physician. I graduated from medical school in 2001. I practiced medicine in Iraq and also in Yemen, and I returned to Iraq — I worked as a doctor in June 2003 until January 2004. By the end of the year I had a dual job to work as translator-fixer for the western journalists and as a doctor back in the hospital. My friend, Rory McCarthy, he is a Baghdad reporter for *The Guardian*; he's a very nice guy, but at the same time, he was a tyrant with me, and in fact he is the one who taught me how to be disciplined when I do a story or I do an interview. There is no way that I can miss questions, there is no way that you can just misrepresent something — you just hear something and you interpret in the way that you think

it's right — no, you have to go and ask him again and again and again. And so he helped me a lot in figuring out these things.

Larry Kaplow
Cox Newspapers

I've been working with the same main translator for more than a year and another one for, I guess, almost a year, and they know that if they make a mistake I can get fired. And I tell them over and over, "Look, if you can't get it, tell me. That's all right. I just need to know that I'm not saying anything more than you actually got out on the street and you're not putting words in these people's mouths." You ask them a lot of questions about where did you talk to the guy, what did he look like. And sometimes you often ask them to get [phone] numbers, so you can have them or another translator call the people back and ask them questions. It's not because they would purposely try to mislead me, although some translators would do that, too, but because they might make assumptions that are not acceptable assumptions for American newspapers to make. Or they might have planted the idea with someone and just got an affirmative response that they then embellished with their own assumptions of what that person is trying to say. And there is just so much bad information here. You just have to check and check and check things over and over and over. People will pass on apocryphal stories as if they happened to them personally. And you find out, well, no, it was actually a cousin; well, no, it wasn't a cousin. Well, no, actually it didn't quite happen like that anyway.

Ali Fadhil
Translator, reporter

You remember Miss Jill Carroll? She was kidnapped on the seventh of January [2006]. On the eighth — actually the same night, on the seventh — midnight, twelve-thirty, my house was raided by special forces, American forces, and they

thought Jill Carroll was in my house. They brought a picture of her and said, "She's at this house; where is she?"

What happened is they used explosives to open the three doors of the house; every single window of the house was blown up, and in sec-

We live in the Hamra Hotel. One receptionist, his house was bombed. The other receptionist, his only son was kidnapped... he got killed in front of their eyes. We are living through their eyes — through our daily contact, with the house boy, the guard.

onds. We thought that a plane maybe fell down on top of the house — we were sleeping; me and my wife, Zina, and two kids, Adam and Sarah. Suddenly we heard this explosion, woke up; Sarah was still sleepy, and in seconds the door was opened — the room door — and a rifle came through and shot bullets inside the room while we are asleep. And I thought, "This is a gang"; that's what I thought, and I throw myself on Zina and the kids. They woke up, they were crying, and in seconds American soldiers are surrounding my bed while I am sleeping with my wife and two kids, and they took me down from the bed. Zina was crying and shouting, Sarah as well; Adam was crying — he was just eight months by that time.

They took me downstairs. In a moment they beat me — just one soldier — and in another moment they brought a dog who started barking at me, and then a captain came and questioned me — showed the pictures, he didn't say the name, just showed the pictures. "This woman is in your house."

"No." And he said, "This is Mashhadani house," by which he means this is a Sunni house; Mashhadani is a Sunni name, a Sunni tribe name. I said, "This can't be — go to the hall, you'll see a big picture of Imam Ali" — this is a shrine, it's a figure of the Shiites. And he went to the hall and he came back, said then, "Who are you? Are you a journalist, as you said?" I said, "Yes, I'm a journalist, filmmaker, working for the British media, blah, blah." It didn't help at the beginning; minutes later, he brought out a camera which I use, and it happened that in that camera there was a mini-DVD tape that shows the Green Zone, and I'm standing in front of the camera talking about the Green Zone, how at one time the Green Zone was the place where the CPA ran Iraq, because I was doing at that time a thing about the reconstruction in Iraq. And he said, "Why do you have these tapes?" I said, "Because I'm a filmmaker and we were doing this project"; I was still doing this project. He said, "Do you realize that these places were targeted two days ago?" I said, "No way, because two days ago I was inside the Green Zone, filming from inside the Green Zone." Later on, he came back with another captain, another officer, and he said, "It seems like there is a mistake, but we want to take you to a place to interrogate you, and you might help us in helping this lady, but we have to take you now and release you tomorrow morning — we promise." And I said, "I have no problem if you are taking me alone and not taking my brother-in-law or my father-in-law."

And by the way, they beat my father-in-law, they beat my brother-in-law a lot, and they were really, really humiliated — more than me; later on, when they knew I was a journalist, I was treated like a prince. They blindfolded me, they put me in an armored vehicle. And finally I found myself in a room, a small room with wooden walls, a table in the middle, a mattress at the side of the wall, and a very, very young American soldier with a pistol at-



Above: Iraqi soldiers and U.S. military advisers patrol the Haifa Street neighborhood in Baghdad. March 17, 2005.
Below: The bodies of Iraqi civilians lie outside a morgue in Baghdad after at least thirty-four people, mostly young men seeking to join the Iraqi army, were killed in a spate of suicide bombings. July 10, 2005. YURI KOZYREV



tached to his leg, standing there guarding me. And minutes later, two American civilians came into the room. They asked me, "Mr. Fad-hil, do you know why you're here?" I said, "Yes, to interrogate me." They said, "No, it's because there was a mistake, and we apologize for what happened." At that moment I was — it's a shock, because they threw the furniture all over the house, they destroyed the entrances of the house. My daughter was shocked — now she hates Americans. She doesn't want to believe that she's in America. She's three years old, and if you tell her you're in America, she's gonna shout. [Fad-hil is now living in New York.]

They said, "In the morning we will release you as soon as possible." I said, "What about the compensation?" And they said, "In the morning, sure, people will come and bring the compensation, and we'll talk with you about the compensation." In the morning, two American civilians — different civilians — came in. They were like people working for the private security forces. They said, "We're gonna drive you now out of the place, with blindfolded eyes, and we brought the compensations." They had two envelopes; they opened the first one and they said, "This is a thousand dollars for the damages of the house." And they opened the other, "This is five hundred for the time you spent with us in the Green Zone," which was the highest-ever salary I ever got in my entire life. I didn't say anything, I just wanted to get out, and they took me in a car and drove right and left, right and left, for like minutes, and then I found myself in a place between concrete barricades. When I walked out from the place a few meters, I found myself in the worst place I would ever imagine myself in. It was the south gate of the Green Zone. That is the place where many car bombs happened, and if someone walks like how I walk, with civilian clothes outside of the Green Zone, and my face is not washed and my hair like this, and I walked out with money, with

a thousand, five hundred dollars in my pocket, and the insurgents caught me — it's no way. Thank God, it was easy to get a taxi. I found the whole house was worse than what I thought: everything was destroyed — all the rooms were ruined, most of the furniture was broken.

Luke Baker
Reuters

We've had four [staff members] killed, three of whom have been killed by the U.S. military [Waled Khaled, Mazen Dana, Taras Protsyuk]; the fourth [Dhia Najim] is under investigation. We've asked

Al-Arabiya packed up a crew and sent them off from Baghdad to go cover the story. Well, it didn't go particularly well. They were stopped. The correspondent was executed. Her crew was executed. And this was her local crew.

for further investigation; as far as we understand he was wearing press credentials — a helmet, a flak jacket with "press" on it — and filming U.S. military operations in Ramadi, and he was shot in the back of the head.

Farnaz Fassihi
The Wall Street Journal

We all have a team of Iraqi staff whose lives we've seen unfold for three years before our eyes. We know their families; we know what's happening to their extended families. We live in a hotel, the Hamra Hotel. The receptionist, one receptionist, his house was

bombed. The other receptionist in building two, his only son was kidnapped because he was selling SIM cards ["smart cards" for mobile phones] and they thought he was selling SIM cards to Americans. And got killed in front of their eyes. We are living through their eyes — through our daily contact, with the house boy, the guard. And our job, by definition, means we spend hours and hours talking to people about their experiences. We don't just say, "Hi, how are you? What's going on outside?" We sit them down and spend two hours and say, "What's going on in your neighborhood? What's going on with your cousin?"

Richard Engel
NBC News

There was the attack on the Golden Dome Mosque in Samarra [on February 22, 2006] and Al-Arabiya dispatched a crew up there — chased the story, big story, one of the most holy [Shia] shrines in the world, certainly in Iraq, is badly damaged, if not destroyed. People are livid — this is a sensitive time to do such a sensitive attack. Al-Arabiya, like you'd cover a fire or breaking news, they pack up a crew and they send them off from Baghdad to go cover the story. Well, it didn't go particularly well. They were stopped. The correspondent was taken out of the car, executed. Her crew was taken out of the car and executed. And that was her local crew.

So that is the reality of chasing a breaking news story. So you can't really do it. You have to rely on someone who's from there, who's bringing you the tapes, and then you have to piece together what happened from accounts from the military, accounts from eyewitnesses, accounts from hospital figures, all of whom maybe have credibility problems. You have to piece together the best you can to come up with a mosaic of what's going on. That's the reality of it. It's not easy because if you get a crew and chase this breaking news story, you might not come back.

The Good News

Anthony Shadid

The Washington Post

When I hear this term "good news" [that the press allegedly fails to report], I think of the Arab world I used to cover in 1995, official news agencies, writing about the accomplishments of President Mubarak. I mean, it was despicable. This was good news in their eyes. I just don't understand the distinction [between "good" stories and "bad" ones]. I mean, what Iraq is today and what they envisioned it being before the invasion of 2003 — How else do you chronicle that except through the deterioration of the country? It's not a success story, and to call it a success story is propagandistic at this point.

Patrick Graham

Freelance writer

A friend of mine who was working for a British paper kept getting a lot of pressure to write "good-news" stories. I can remember him saying, "I've written a good-news story in Hillah; I hope they print it before Hillah blows up."

Rajiv Chandrasekaran

The Washington Post

You've got journalists saying to the embassy there, "So tell us about the reconstruction projects you're doing, tell us about the great things you're doing so we can write about it and show this side of the story." You've got public information officers saying, "Sure, we'll take you there, but you can't say where it is, and you can't name anybody, and you can't take any pictures, because if we point out the location of this, it could be a target for the insurgency, and if we name people, they could be subject to retribution." Is that really progress when you can't go and report basic facts of something because they're too worried it's going to be attacked?

Dan Murphy

The Christian Science Monitor

Good news? My first inclination is to say, "What fucking good news?"

The violence and criminality of Iraq has only grown in the three years that I've been here. And there is not an honest metric that shows anything but that. That's the big story. If the Jets and the Sharks were ruling the streets of Manhattan after dark, that's the big story, not whether or not the municipality painted a few schools. Now, we have covered in great length and detail, and I'm talking about the press in general, all

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sorts of stuff that's been done, whether it's been power plants that have been redone, water plants that have been rebuilt. Of course, after a while the Americans didn't want you to go see stuff they'd rebuilt because if it gets publicized, it's more likely to get blown up sooner. Reconstruction has failed because there is a war on. And I'm not aware of any single war in human history in which basic living conditions of citizens living in the war zone improved before the war ended.

Yousif Mohamed Basil

Translator

Time (CNN)

As an Iraqi, living inside Iraq, I cannot hear good news, and even if there is good news, you cannot hear

it with the noises of explosions and the noises of the terrorists and the noises of American military operations. It's very difficult to hear a lot of things. It's very difficult to practice a lot of rights. It's very difficult to practice freedom. It's very difficult to do a lot of things. So, there's no good news about Iraq. There's no good news at all.

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad

The Guardian, Getty Images

So this debate accusing the media of not conveying the good news is such a — I mean do those people know what we are digging through when we go to Iraq? Just flying into Baghdad, driving, just doing the simplest, the basic, simple things, just being in Baghdad, existing in Baghdad is one of the most dangerous things you can do in your life, let alone covering it. So the effort we put into writing a story, any simple story, is enormous. And none of us, I don't know any journalist who accepts taking such a risk just to manipulate the truth or write the bad news because you have this hidden agenda. People are getting killed on a sectarian basis. People are leaving their neighborhoods. Militias are roaming the streets; despots are functioning in Iraq. People are getting kidnapped; people are getting killed. Everyone's getting killed: barbers, bakers, professors, officers, insurgents, Americans — everyone's getting killed. So what are you going to write?

Borzou Daragahi

Los Angeles Times

They would spend ridiculous amounts of money on painting schools and, you know, hire some fancy contractor to paint the schools as opposed to giving some Iraqis the job. So there were a lot of complications with the reconstruction. Everyone was trying to make a buck or two off this thing — and it was wrong! It was wrong! It didn't work! All these theories [Defense Secretary Donald] Rumsfeld had about this leaner, meaner military that subcontracts everything — it



A young Iraqi in the Medical City Hospital in Baghdad, where corpses lie in the hallways, mourns a victim of the stampede on the bridge between Adhamiya and Kadhamiya that killed nearly a thousand. Panic overtook a crowd of worshippers after warnings of a suicide bomber spread among the more than one million people gathered at a Shiite shrine in the capital. September 1, 2005. **CHRISTOPH BANGERT**

just didn't work. It was a failure. You can say that objectively.

Caroline Hawley
BBC

I'll never forget going to a school that was supposedly rehabilitated. And there was the adviser of the Education Ministry and he was in tears because of the shoddy job that had been done. It was basically a paint job had been done in the school; it hadn't really been renovated. The toilets didn't work, and this was the school that we had been taken to for showcasing the reconstruction at the beginning of the school year. And it was clear that the contract to redo the school had passed through many hands, and a very cheap job had been done at the end.

Andrew Lee Butters
Freelance writer

I think a good question is how accurate a picture of Iraq Americans actually want. When I came home to the United States in fall 2004, around the time of the elections, people would ask me about Iraq at every party or event. I remember being at a Republican election-night party in Delaware, because my uncle was running for governor of Delaware, and people just asked me about Iraq. They couldn't understand and were just very surprised to hear me say that things weren't actually going very well. Somehow they would see these explosions and just think that it's okay when things just blew up all the time. Somehow —

as these bombings keep going on — there was a flourishing civil society going on? A society that just ignores these things? Much responsibility is placed on the press, what they're doing and what they're not doing. But I think the American public shared a certain amount of responsibility by shutting its eyes.

Dexter Filkins
The New York Times

What has struck me about the criticism about us, about the press in this war, is, number one, how virulent it is, absolutely take-no-prisoners, the "you're not an American and I hope you die" sort of criticism. But it's being made by people who aren't there and who claim some kind of superior knowledge even though they're not there. I re-



At Camp Mercury, U.S. paratroopers in the 1-504th regiment of the Eighty-second Airborne Division (the "Red Devils") pray before launching an overnight raid in Fallujah. November 25, 2003. CHRIS HONDROS/GETTY IMAGES

member when I was in Fallujah, I was with a company of soldiers when the Marines invaded Fallujah to take it back from the insurgents in November 2004. We went into that city on foot. I was with those guys for eight days, and a quarter of the unit was killed or wounded, I mean it was an absolute bloodbath. But I was there, and on one or two occasions I was able to hook up my satellite phone and I downloaded some stuff, hoping to get some stuff from my office in New York. I remember there were people sending e-mails to me in the United States telling me that I was out of my mind about what I was seeing and that I was wrong. Maybe I was wrong, but I mean how would somebody in Minnesota who is sitting at their computer screen . . . but anyway, that's the world that we live in.

Farnaz Fassihi
The Wall Street Journal

[In September 2004, an e-mail about living and reporting in a deteriorating Iraq that Fassihi had written and sent to friends started to circulate widely on the Internet. Then, in February 2006, as she was leaving that country, she wrote a first-person piece for the *Journal* about trying to live and work in Baghdad as the war closed in.]

When I wrote my first-person departure piece, I got thirty-six pages of e-mail. The response was overwhelming. And I couldn't believe that people would say, "We had no idea."

It still gets to me that people say, "It's that bad in Iraq? We had no idea." And I'm like, "What do you mean, you had no idea? How can

you think that? By your own admission you're a *Journal* subscriber for thirty years. Have you been reading my stories? What do you mean?" I think it just doesn't grab them the same way. For three years we've been writing this. I don't know why people respond to first-person pieces with, "Is it really that bad?"

Jon Lee Anderson
The New Yorker

I remember — September 2004, I think it was. Everybody was commenting on Farnaz Fassihi's e-mail, in which she expressed just what it was like to report in Iraq, sort of no-holds barred, and I happened to be on book tour in the United States following that, and everybody was talking about it — all the editors. And I think it made a lot of people stop and think, "Well, how come every-

body's so surprised about this? We thought they knew."

I am in a lot of my pieces where it seemed necessary to be so, where if things happened to me or I witnessed them, they're in the pieces — but that isn't necessarily the case for a lot of newspaper reporters. They're more confined to reporting what their assigned news assignment or the perceived news of the day is. And I think that particularly made a lot of newspaper reporters stop and think, "Well, why is everybody so surprised?"

John Burns
The New York Times

I thought that [Farnaz Fassihi's] e-mail was very damaging and, frankly, untrue. And it was untrue even of Farnaz's own journalism because she was a brave and resourceful reporter herself. But it encouraged the view that there was nothing that could be done usefully and that we were locked up in our compound. And it just wasn't true.

Those people who are looking for a way to discredit us — I think more from the left than the right, actually — people who think this war was fatally conceived and was doomed to failure of course have an interest in representing the press as having uncovered all the things that have gone wrong. And those people latched on to [Farnaz's] e-mail in the aftermath to say, "Well, of course, we're not in a position to tell the truth about Iraq." It's simply not true.

When this crops up in my e-mail, as it does often enough, from people who haven't taken the trouble to read *The New York Times*, saying, "You never cover this, you never cover that," I think, "Look, first, if you read the paper, you'll find that we do cover these things. And secondly, come on out here and spend a few days with us and see how difficult this is. How we do actually go out and take enormous risks." My problem with our staff is not getting them to go out. It's cautioning them that if we're going to stay in business, if we're going to stay

alive, we have to be pretty shrewd about the risks that we take.

Dexter Filkins
The New York Times

There's a constant everyday temptation to answer the question whether this gigantic, unbelievably ambitious undertaking that is the constructing of a democracy in Iraq is going to succeed or fail. And I know I ask myself that question every day when I'm there: Is it failing or is it succeeding? I always ask myself that question, and it certainly informs everything I do: Where's it headed? Is it going down or is it going up? But I would say that I think that's something that we should always be thinking about, and I think it's something that I hope our readers think about a lot as well. But I'd also say that we're not, and we shouldn't be expected to be in the business of predicting how things are going. And there's a temptation to do that, and there are recriminations or criticisms that we've faced because we've not done that. "Why didn't you tell us that this was going to fail?" etcetera, etcetera. So I guess I would say — and I don't care, you don't even have to print this — that our job is, first, to report what happens, and what happened that day, why and how and all that. But it's not really our job to guess what's going to come next, and I think that in the sort of supercharged atmosphere that we're in over this war, because it's been so polarizing, there is a temptation and an expectation by many people that we do that, and I think it's important that we don't. And I don't think it's appropriate. It's not appropriate that people would expect that we would, you know?

Alissa Rubin
Los Angeles Times

There's this constant balancing act between being credulous and being cynical, and you don't want to be either one. You want to have

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sort of the appropriate level of skepticism. Lead the reader helpfully through the maze. Create a narrative that they can find compelling. All in roughly a thousand words. Day in, day out, you don't always do it right.

We tend not to be analytic. We tell a story and we don't step back and ask ourselves, "Okay, well if this is true, then what does it mean for the big picture?" We tend to be very good at telling the story we see before us. Very accurate, often. But then, what does that mean for the likelihood of success of what the Americans were trying to do in Iraq? I think we didn't step back and think hard enough about that soon enough. And it's not an individual failure. It's almost a cultural aspect of American reporting that is in some ways a strength and in some ways a weakness. We have this idea that we're supposed to be objective. So it's on one hand, on the other hand. These people say this, these people say that. But if that's the only way you report it, sometimes you don't serve the reader because you haven't helped guide them about which one might actually be true.

The Continuing Story

Richard Engel
NBC News

I've been in Iraq for a while. I've been there longer than any of the military guys, and they rotate through, and they're always the same: at first, you know, they come in with a message, and they treat you badly — I've gone through so many divisions. It drives me crazy. Every time, they come in and they treat me like a stranger. Let's say, I've spent a year with the Third Infantry Division, and I know all the generals, I know all the PAOs, the public affairs officers, and I know all the captains on the frontline units. I know them, they know me, we trust each other to a degree. When soldiers are killed, a lot of

times I know the units that they're in. I don't report that because they ask you not to; they want the families to be informed officially, not to have someone watch the *Nightly News* with Brian Williams and find their son is dead. I agree with that and respect that. After a while you build up trust, and you can have a real relationship and they'll tell you information and you can tell them information and you can build a relationship of trust. Then, they rotate out, and a new division comes in, and they treat you like the enemy, like a stupid enemy, like you don't know anything and everything is great. The guy's been on the ground for two weeks and he's telling me about Baghdad, and I'm like, "Look, you just got here. I had a great relationship with the divisions that just left. Didn't they tell you?" And then okay, six months later, the guy finally trusts me and then I get six months of real, working relationship with him, and then he's gone, and I have to start the relationship again. So that happens a lot with the military. You work up a relationship and they go [laughs].

Paul Holmes
Reuters

I have young journalists who come to me and say, "I want to go to Iraq." And my response to them is, "I will help you to build the sort of experience that would qualify you to go to Iraq, but you can't go to Iraq. I'm sorry." And most of them, in fact, all of them, have accepted it. I don't think anybody should have to go to Iraq unless they have experience in a previous conflict, because I don't think it's fair to them, I don't think it's fair to their colleagues, and I don't think it's particularly good for the story. So we look at their experience, we look at their maturity. In a place like Iraq, they live and work with their colleagues in a compound where they can't go out for most of the day and all of the night, and that requires a very special sort of person; you can't have prima donnas in that environment, you can't have loudmouths in that envi-

ronment. I've worked in that sort of environment with loudmouths, and it's unbearable.

Chris Hondros
Getty Images

I think a lot of journalists want every war to be like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: a place where you can stay in a nice hotel, get up in the morning, drive in your car, see a battle, cover it, see all these dramatic things, and then drive back



just in time to send your pictures and have a nice dinner at the American Colony [Hotel], and smoke and drink wine, and tell war stories, and what happened that day, and booze it up into the night, and do everything all over again the next day. That's nice; I've covered stuff there, too, but the world isn't conformed to how journalists should cover — the world is as it is and we as journalists go and do it. Sometimes things are easy and sometimes things are incredibly hard.

Dan Murphy
The Christian Science Monitor

I had gone and watched a movie with a buddy in Mansur one night, fall or early winter of 2004, and we wanted to go over the bridge. The bridge that you go over to go toward the airport, and there was an American vehicle checkpoint

set up basically blocking the way you wanted to go on the bridge. It would have meant a twenty-minute detour for us. There were three or four cars that would pull up and they would turn around; it was late at night.

So we stopped and rolled down the window and a private walks over and I said, "I'm an American

A marine guards a detainee in a makeshift holding cell in the Iraqi town of Saqlawiyah. January 20, 2006. TOBY MORRIS.





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reporter, can you let me through, 'cause this is going to take another twenty minutes and it's dark and a little dangerous and we're just going over there." The guy says, "Shut the fuck up." I say, "Look man, I don't want to make trouble for you," and while I'm talking to him he's got his flashlight and he's moving it in frenetic circles over both of my eyes. I said, "Look, really man, I'm just trying to get home. Is there any way we can just get through?" And he says, "Now you've done it! I'm pulling you over and I'm making you wait here while we search your whole car."

So we comply. We got out of the car, stand away from the car as we were told to, open the trunk, etcetera. And this is my friend's driver, an Iraqi driver who I had just met that evening, so I felt pretty bad that I had gotten him into that situation. And the pimply private comes over and he says to me, "Yeah, how do you like that? You see what you get when you fuck with me?" Like two feet from my face. And not to my perfect credit, I basically called him a word that will famously get you thrown out of any baseball game that has ever been played. You can figure that out for yourself. Not a pleasant word. And that was it. He goes and talks to his commanding officer, who comes over and within two minutes has me zip-tied, handcuffed, roughly searched, and interrogated for fifteen minutes. We go through this and I'm calm, as I usually am, and eventually they're like, I guess we can't arrest an American for using language that we don't like. They untie me, and we drove off and go home.

About a week later, we get an e-mail addressed to *The Christian Science Monitor* Baghdad bureau chief, and I was chief at the time, and it's a letter written by the general in Baghdad at the time. The letter goes on to say we've had a lot of complaints about the conduct of our troops in the field and we try to hold ourselves to a high standard and correct problems when they are brought to

our attention by the press, but we think you have to be equally responsible and aware of the terrible behavior of your people. For instance, this guy Dan Murphy was stopped and was politely asked to step out of his car and he refused and launched into a profanity-laced, anti-American tirade, and he was so agitated and physically wild that we had to restrain him for his safety and our own. And etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. That was completely fantasy. It was lies. And I have no doubt that the general who wrote this letter believed it; he had attached the incident report written

It's terribly, terribly expensive. We have two houses. We have blast walls. We have, I don't know, thirty or forty armed guards 'round the clock. We have three armored cars, two generators, two satellite systems . . .

by the soldiers who were involved in this little incident.

Basically, I responded and said I happen to be that guy, and I will tell you exactly what happened, and of course [the report] has no truth because these things have no truth. And he apologized and said, "These things get garbled in transmission, sorry." Now, does this incident matter in the big scheme of things? No. Did the guys on that patrol lie because they thought that maybe arresting Americans for using one naughty word isn't the thing they should be doing? Maybe. Was what he was told by the soldiers in the field, who of course might have an incentive to lie, believed wholeheartedly by this general?

Absolutely. Does it lead me to believe — given the source from the podium in the Green Zone and elsewhere over three years now — that these sorts of reports are far from the whole truth? Absolutely. Have there been military investigations that have proven the same? Absolutely. I think you get the point of the story.

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad
The Guardian, Getty Images

So it was a very weird experience [to report alongside the insurgents] but, again, I think I'm so privileged to have that weird experience because those people — call them what you want, call them insurgents, call them terrorists, call them nut cases, call them jihadis, anything. But you have to understand. If you want to know what's happening, it's not enough to brand them terrorists and then go and kill every one of them. It's not enough. So I think that going to the other side, and writing about the other side is a very, very important thing.

And I told you, every time I see an American armored vehicle driving through a street, I think "Oh my God," and I see this gun pointing at the people and I think, "Oh my God, he will kill me now, he will shoot me now." And you are so scared; most of the time I'm scared. And every time I see an armored vehicle, even in 2003, even in April 2003, an armored vehicle, a machine gun is a big huge massive thing, and it's a scary thing. And I'm scared, of course. And every time I see a big American gun, I'm scared.

But when I was inside the American camp, and when I was seeing the same street, I was seeing it through a black-and-white infrared screen, every moving being was black and every still building was white, and then you see these black things getting very close to your armored vehicle and you think, "My God, why are they getting so close, why isn't he killing them? Why isn't he shooting them, defending . . ." Automatically you

are switched, and you become on the other side. So I do understand why the American soldiers look at the insurgents as the enemy, and I do understand why the insurgents look at the U.S. soldiers as the enemy. But for us journalists, we have to do this amazing, very difficult mental exercise to try to keep ourselves in the middle.

Borzou Daragahi
Los Angeles Times

I used to go and hang out here [in Baghdad]. I used to kind of fun things once. We used to go to a hair salon and just hang out, or a barbershop. We used to go to restaurants. I still try to go to my favorite little DVD shop, but recently a friend of mine went and it was closed. It's like our world is getting smaller and smaller. The opportunities for interacting with ordinary Iraqi people have gotten fewer and fewer.

Now I'm determined to be able to do this, so we invite people. I recently invited an Iraqi family that I wanted to interview for a story over to the compound for lunch. And we brought the whole family over, sat down to lunch, and had like a two-hour conversation. They weren't afraid. But I offered to go to their house and they said, "No, we don't want you to come to our house." And I said, "Oh wow, are you guys afraid that your neighbors will see me and come and get you later?" And they were like, "No, our neighbors know we interact with foreigners, they know who we are, but we're afraid that you're gonna get killed at one of the rolling checkpoints."

Farnaz Fassihi
The Wall Street Journal

When I left Iraq for the first time — you know, the tensions in Iraq are so extreme. We were constantly, twenty-four hours a day, on a state of high alert, survival mode. That situation, constantly under tension, you don't really sleep well. You don't know what's going to happen the next moment. In addition to feeling that for yourself,

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An Iraqi looks at the shattered windshield of a car after a bomb attack outside a Sunni mosque in Baghdad, where blasts rocked two Sunni mosques shortly after Friday noon prayers, killing at least five people and wounding nine. July 7, 2006. REUTERS/CEERWAN AZIZ/LANDOV

you're also worried about your colleagues. I was very worried about the Iraqi staff. Being responsible for security of the Iraqi staff. And all the bad things, the terrible things you cover. All the horror, all the misery of the Iraqis.

Every time I left Iraq, I would just stay in a hotel in Amman for two days doing nothing. I couldn't immediately jump on a plane home. For me, anxiety would come in the most unusual places. Like suddenly in a commercial flight. Or for a really long time, I couldn't sit by the window in New York. Or anywhere. When I'd walk into a restaurant I'd constantly choose the furthest seat from the window. Because I always associ-

ated windows with smashing. I'd seen it happen several times where a car bomb had gone off and smashed the windows. So you avoid sitting by the window.

We talk to each other. Journalists talk to each other about these kind of things. That's one thing . . .

Colonel William Darley *Military Review*

What I try to impress upon [soldiers] is that the inside-the-Beltway media is not the media. It's the inside-the-Beltway media. And they need to understand also that reporters are very much like them. They're idealists, they believe. They're not working for money; they're working for what they re-

gard as a mission, and their mission is to tell the truth, and to get the truth out to the American people so people can make rational decisions about their government and about their society. And that they're talented, for the most part, very talented guys and girls out there.

Dexter Filkins *The New York Times*

When you're a target, it's different — it's weird, you know? It's really strange. Any number of times I've been in a car driving down the road, and suddenly a car will come after me, and you don't want to hang around and figure out why they're trying to run you off the

road or cut you off. And I've been chased, cut off, guys with guns, the whole thing. It so suddenly kind of turns on you. You will not unwind while you're there in Iraq. You just can't. You're just kind of cranked up for however long you're there. You're just kind of wound up. The last time I was there I did seventeen weeks, so I stayed out for a long time, but —

The foreign press corps, maybe a group of about twenty or thirty people who go to Iraq regularly, know more about Iraq than anybody. More than the people at the embassy who are stuck inside the Green Zone. More than the military behind their barbed wire.

so it's usually a couple of months and you're pretty fried. But it's mostly the isolation. It's just very, very isolated. There's nothing much else to do except work. You're in this house, cooped up a lot of time. You're working all the time. You really have to work a lot because everything moves so slowly that if you do sixteen hours, it's like you moved this gigantic wheel one little click. So the next day you work another sixteen hours and the wheel moves another click. It's all so slow now and truncated that it just takes more and more labor to get the smallest thing done.

The really horrible security situation in Iraq has made it not just terribly dangerous to report there but terribly, terribly expensive. And the result of that has been that the danger has chased a lot of reporters away. In '03 and '04

there were hundreds of reporters there, you know? And you never really saw them until some muckety-muck would come into town and go to the Green Zone for a press conference, and everybody would crowd in there, and there were four or five hundred reporters there. Now maybe there's like fifty. There's nothing — there's nobody there. The Europeans are all gone. There's a few Brits. There's just basically the big American papers and the TV networks, but the TV networks can hardly get out because they're carrying all this incredibly expensive equipment. Part of that is the danger and part of that is the unbelievable expense. When I just think of the money that *The New York Times* has paid, has shelled out and continues to shell out to allow us to report there, it's just mind-boggling, you know, millions of dollars. We have two houses. We have blast walls. We have, I don't know, thirty or forty armed guards round the clock. We have three armored cars, which together probably cost a million dollars. We have two generators large enough to power two houses that can run around the clock, which usually do run around the clock and which drink an enormous amount of gasoline every day. We have two satellite systems — a regular one and then a back-up whenever that one fails so that we can be in constant communication with the outside world; we have — we run up these unbelievable satellite phone bills and cellular phone bills.

Tom Lasseter
Knight Ridder (McClatchy)

Most of western Iraq — you just can't function out there as a western reporter. The country has gotten smaller and smaller. I miss Iraq, I do. I live in Baghdad, but I miss the country.

Farnaz Fassihi
The Wall Street Journal

I can't imagine going to Iraq for the first time now and writing it. Truly you do not know the coun-

try. You would be writing blindly, with no tangible sense of the place or the people. So I think that as we've sort of gotten tired and cycled out, it's going to be interesting to see how that's going to play out.

Christopher Allbritton
Freelance writer

I hope I contributed to the world's understanding of what's happening in Iraq. I would like to avoid going back to Iraq. I'm not personally interested in the story anymore. Burned out. With too few breaks. Most of the world is waiting for this train wreck to run its course. Anyone can see it's going from bad to worse to truly terrible.

Anne Garrels
NPR

So you really do see a huge amount by being on the ground, and you don't always realize how much you're seeing at the time until you then go and sit with another unit and you go, "Wait a minute — they're doing . . ." So that's why I keep going back, because the more you know, the more you know. When I think about how little I knew to start with, it seems a shame to give up now when I actually know something and know better questions to ask and have seen three and a half years of this. On the other hand, you have to ask yourself, "Are you getting a little nutty?"

Larry Kaplow
Cox Newspapers

It takes hundreds and hundreds of stories to get a point across, to get a reality across, to a country the size of the United States. And if reporters start dwindling in numbers here, it's going to be harder and harder to get across whatever is happening here, whether it's good or bad.

Caroline Hawley
BBC

My big worry is that the audience sometimes doesn't know what they are missing because we as journal-

ists didn't all know what we were missing, because we were unable to function as we would anywhere else in the world. You are unable to just go and chat with people in coffee shops. You're unable to just drive up to a town an hour north of Baghdad, a mixed Shiite and Sunni town, and chat with people about sectarian division. You are unable to do all the things that you felt you should have been doing. And my worry always was that we didn't know how much we were missing.

Anne Barnard
The Boston Globe

The most personal thing I have to say about this probably is that when I first came into Iraq, it was really a feeling that a Band Aid had been ripped off the skin of Iraq — that everything was raw, everything was new. It might be a little painful or disorienting, but people were starting to talk, and people were spilling out these sto-

**Sure enough, I hear
children's voices
inside the car, and
I knew it was a
family. The doors
open and kids just
tumble out of the
car, one after one
after one — six in
all. One was shot to
the abdomen . . .**

ries. People had many hopes and many fears, and it was the most dynamic experience I've ever experienced as a reporter, or personally. There's a lot of sadness when I look back on that, when I look back on what might have been. And not to give the wrong impression — readers should know that Iraqis still are, in fact, going to work every day and going to the market. But the overarching fear

and uncertainty I'm sure they didn't know would last has lasted three years and counting.

But Iraq had suddenly broken open and all these things — both therapeutic and really ugly — were bursting out of people, and literally these bodies were bursting out of the ground. And people were digging up, on their hands and knees, digging up the ribs and the femurs of their relatives that had been buried by Saddam. They were finding them in these graves. At the time you had this idea that it was going to be like the end of the Soviet Union, and people were going to start reexamining their own personal choices in having condoned or supported or tolerated that regime, and that that would be a healthy process for the country.

But instead, the ugliness of what came out from things that were buried, physically and metaphorically, was just too much. There was so much anger that had to come out. And when you combine that with the failures of the American occupation to provide a safe environment for those things to be worked out, you got the situation that we have today.

Liz Sly
Chicago Tribune

There is a sort of cumulative [effect] to being there. It just hasn't reached the point yet that I just want to stop finding out what is going on. The more time you spend there, the more you learn about the place, and the more you learn about the place, the harder it is to let go of the story because you become more entrenched in it, you become more entwined in it. It's kind of a matter of seeing where the movie ends up.

I think you are looking at a situation where the foreign press corps, maybe a group of about twenty or thirty people who go to Iraq regularly, probably know more about Iraq than anyone else. More than the people at the embassy who are stuck inside the Green Zone and only get a particularly slanted point of view. More

than the military behind their barbed wire.

Occasionally my desk will ask me, "Can we get an expert to explain this to us?" Or "Is there a report on how many deaths there have been and that kind of thing?" You haven't got experts who know about Iraq. You have experts who are very well informed about Iraq. But the details of what is going on on the ground, the day-to-day bits of things, really, the journalists are the only ones who know that.

Chris Hondros
Getty Images

There was a particular incident that happened on January 18, 2005, up in Tal Afar in the north of Iraq. I got out there on Saturday, and they wanted me to go out [on an embed] on this mission they had going out on Sunday. The next day, we went on a routine patrol. I got with one unit that seemed to be pretty good: the Apache company. They were pretty press-friendly, these guys, and we went on a walking patrol in downtown Tal Afar, just in the middle of the afternoon, handing out flyers supporting the upcoming election and all that. And sure enough, in the middle of the afternoon we got into a firefight. They got ambushed a little bit — a few shots were fired, and before they knew it they were surrounded, and they were firing out, they were firing in — dramatic, hourlong gun-battle in downtown Tal Afar. And because none of their guys were injured, and they basically came back, they were all exhilarated, and I had all these dramatic pictures, and they liked them. Then Monday I just hung around the base. The mortar guys, the guys who fire the long-range mortars, they were just firing a few mortars — I took some pictures of that, nothing special.





Iraqi Shiite women hold empty bullet casings in the al-Sheela district of Baghdad after a raid on suspected insurgents by Iraqi and U.S. troops. August 1, 2006. REUTERS/THAIER AL-SUDANI/LANDOV

And then finally on Tuesday, the same guys — the Apache guys who were in the firefight — were going out on a late afternoon patrol. So I said, "All right, I'll go on that." But they got delayed. So finally at six we went out, and it was the same kind of thing, a little smaller, like a small group of twenty men or so, patrolling. And it was also dark by this point. So they're out on the streets, and it's after the curfew, which is about six o'clock. And as we were patrolling on a darkened boulevard, in the distance, a car, maybe a

hundred yards down at least, turned onto the boulevard and started coming toward us. And I already had a bad feeling, you know? Because these are camouflaged [soldiers]; they don't patrol regularly, and they don't call much attention to themselves, because if they have lights and sirens and things like that they'd be seen or easily attacked. So here's a bunch of testy men with guns running around and a car coming towards them, and they don't let cars come toward them.

I had a feeling the situation was

going to end up badly. So I moved over to the side, because I feared at least some warning shots would be fired. The car kept coming. It was dark. Sure enough, somebody fired some warning shots, the car kept coming. And then they fired into the car. And it limped into the intersection, clearly no longer under its own power, just on momentum, and gently came to rest on a curb. I was kind of paralyzed, and then slowly walked to the car and, sure enough, I hear children's voices inside the car, and I knew it was a family. The doors opened;



the back doors opened, and kids just tumble out of the car, one after one after one — six in all. One was shot to the abdomen, though we didn't realize he was shot at the time, though he was bleeding profusely and as soon as he dropped, there was blood in the street. The soldiers realized it was a civilian car. They ran and grabbed all the kids and ran them to the sidewalk. In the front seat, what ended up being the parents were killed, riddled with bullets, instantly dead. The children in the back were, incredibly enough, okay, except for the one kid who was winged in the abdomen.

I photographed the car coming in, and even the tail end of it getting shot up and it resting on the curb, the children coming out, the soldiers carrying them over to the side, treating them, looking them over, trying to figure out who was shot, who was not. And the father — the mother's body was collapsed, you could hardly see her, but the father was still sitting up on the seat, riddled with bullets, his skull had almost collapsed because it had been shot so many times.

What happened was — and we found out from the boy who was shot, he ended up being flown to Boston for treatment — they were out visiting with family or something and they knew that their curfew was in the evening, so they were trying to get home. It was a little bit after the curfew, but time is never a precise thing to Iraqis — it's not like this German, iron-clad, six-o-one curfew. It's more like, all right, you're not supposed to be driving around at night. Generally speaking, you could be out on the roads after six o'clock and nothing would happen to you. They were just trying to hustle and get home, and they're driving along, and all of a sudden they hear shots. They don't see — it's dark — they don't see camouflaged soldiers in the

dark in front of them. They just hear shots. Now, when you're in a car driving around Iraq and you hear shots, your first instinct is to speed up, because either someone's shooting at you for some reason or somebody's about to get into a battle nearby. Either way, you don't want to be around there; you want to get out of there. And then, the headlight range — by the time they actually get into the region of your headlights, forget it, that's way too close, they're already engaging you by that point, shooting you up by that point. So that's why they didn't stop.

I stepped out of the major's office, ran back to my trailer, and flipped open my sat phone, got all the pictures and, *whoa*, the pictures did come out. And I said, 'Okay, send, send! . . . Quickly! Quickly! Send! Send! Send!'

So I photographed this thing, and again [the military] didn't try to obstruct me or stop me from photographing — and they could have — and it's kind of remarkable that they didn't; it's kind of a human reaction and so on. But they didn't, and that has happened before: sketchy things have happened on embeds. Almost every soldier in Iraq has been involved in some sort of incident like that or another, I would say. Their attitude about it was grim, but it wasn't the end of their world. It was, "Well, kind of wished they'd stopped. We fired warning shots.

Damn, I don't know why the hell they didn't stop. What're you doing later, you want to play Nintendo? Okay." Just a day's work for them. That stuff happens in Iraq a lot. That's why it's such a damn mess, because almost everybody's had something like that happen to them at the hands of U.S. soldiers. They hate them.

But I realize, as much as that happens in Iraq, it almost never gets photographed, and so I did realize I was onto an important set of pictures. I was also technically worried if I had anything at all because it was completely pitch dark, almost to the limits of what can be photographed, and I had the camera set in a way that lets in the maximum amount of light but often blurs photos, so I was worried that it would be a bunch of mush. So I played along with their casual attitude, because I didn't want them to realize what I suspected: that this would be an important set of pictures that would go out a lot. I wasn't saying, "What's your name? What's his name? What happened here?" I was just trying to photograph, and I was just trying to stay in the background — click-click quietly, didn't say anything, didn't offer up any opinion or anything. And then it's, "We're going now." "All right, ready to go?" "Okay."

They radioed ahead to the base about what had happened, and I met up with the major there on the base, an officer who ran it, and who probably knew a little better than these guys that what had happened out there could get out, that a journalist was along. So he calls me to his office as soon as I get back, and he says, "Pretty unfortunate what happened out there, Chris. We're going to investigate, see what happened. We'd appreciate it if you held off on sending those photos for a couple of days, because we're going to investigate,

Marine Lance Corporal Christopher Higgins from Philadelphia at the "Train Station," a Marine base on the outskirts of Fallujah. His unit spends more time patrolling Fallujah than any other unit and is exposed to more attacks than most. February 14, 2006. TOBY MORRIS

try to see if we can get to the bottom of what happened out there." I want to get these photos out. Whether we send them on the news wire or not, that can be negotiated, but I need to get these back to New York before something happens. I mean, they have the capability to jam all communications from base, including my personal sat phone, but they don't want me to send these photos out. Their base, one hundred percent their property, they're the Army, they have no reason whatsoever not to confiscate my sat phone or jam communications to prevent me from sending the pictures. So I said, "Well, I have to talk to my boss, but yeah, I think we want to work with you there, Major. So I think we can probably do something like that, let me check but I think we'll be okay." And then I stepped out of the major's office, ran back to my trailer, and flipped open my sat phone, got all the pictures and looked at them, and *whoa*, I couldn't believe how much information was there. The pictures did come out. And I said, "Okay, send, send! Tone them up, tone them up, quickly, quickly, send, send, send!"

And I put on the captions: "Don't send these out until you hear from me, until you hear from my boss" — Pancho Bernasconi is my boss. So I sent twenty pictures, and I got my Thuraya phone. I talked to Bernasconi and I said you better talk to this guy about what to do, and he said, "I'll talk to him." So I walked back over to the major's office, but the major had gone to bed. And then there was a captain who I'd also talked to earli-

er, still up, and I said, "I have my boss on the phone, can you guys talk about . . ." and the captain, young sport, he said, "Yeah, okay, sure." So they talked, and I heard them talking, and I heard his side. He said, "Well, we'd like to hold onto these photos. We're asking you not to send them out for a few days so we can investigate . . . Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. Yeah, well, we wanted a little bit of time for us

They had no warning whatsoever. They just looked on the Web sites in the morning and they see these horrible pictures of U.S. soldiers shooting up an Iraqi family. So the major comes up and says, 'What happened, Chris?'

to get the investigation, uh-huh." And I think what my boss was saying was, "Well, we're a wire service, by the time we put them on our wire — but they won't actually be in papers till a day or two, [or] maybe not — people use them or not, it just depends." I heard that back and forth, and the captain said, "All right, well, I think we've come to an agreement" or something, and gave the phone back to me. So I went to bed.

Six a.m. next morning — [makes

knocking sounds] — "The major wants to see you right away!" Oh boy, here we go. The major's up bright and early. The major had already received an e-mail from Baghdad, the army office in Baghdad, because the photos were distributed right away by my office and immediately went out all over the world right away. Meanwhile, Baghdad Central Command had not been informed. If there's something controversial, they're supposed to report that to Baghdad and say, "Hey, by the way, there's going to be some bad press coming out of here because we had a friendly-fire incident." Then the Baghdad press office is always able to kind of prepare for it. They had no warning whatsoever. They just looked on the Web sites in the morning and they see these series of horrible pictures of U.S. soldiers shooting up an Iraqi family.

So the major comes up to me. "What happened, Chris? I thought we had an agreement. I thought you said you were going to hold onto those photos." I said, "Well, major, I came back and you were in bed. I talked to the captain." And the captain was right there and [the major] said, "What! Captain? Did he come back here last night?" and [the captain] said, "Well, yes, sir, but I talked to his boss and he . . ." and [the major] said, "Chris, excuse me for a second." And the poor captain's watching his career evaporate. The captain was saying, "Well, I thought — my impression was that the boss in New York said they were going to hold them."

And you know, it was a confusing thing. ■

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Today, the Hindu practice of health and spirituality is loved by everybody — including the press. But it took a couple of centuries to get there.

FEAR OF YOGA



BY ROBERT LOVE

Yoga is the *Survivor* of the culture wars: unbloodied, unmuddied, unbothered by the media's slings and arrows, its leotard still as pristine as its reputation. Everybody loves yoga; sixteen and a half million Americans practice it regularly, and twenty-five million more say they will try it this year. If you've been awake and breathing air in the twenty-first century, you already know that this

BELLE MELLOR

Hindu practice of health and spirituality has long ago moved on from the toe-ring set. Yoga *is* American; it has graced the cover of *Time* twice, acquired the approval of A-list celebrities like Madonna, Sting, and Jennifer Aniston, and is still the go-to trend story for editors and reporters, who produce an average of eight yoga stories a day in the English-speaking world.

Journalists love yoga because it fits perfectly into

the narratives of everyday life. YOGA JOINS THE TREATMENTS FOR KIDS WITH DISABILITIES, reported the *Evansville Courier & Press* this summer. YOGA HELPS PREGNANT WOMEN PREPARE FOR DELIVERY, according to WNCN in North Carolina, an NBC affiliate, which recently broadcast a report about a prenatal yoga class offered by Healthy Moms in Raleigh. SOLDIERS SHAPE UP WITH PEACEFUL YOGA, an AP-by-lined piece about how they are using yoga to both prepare for and recover from combat, ran in the *Bradenton* [Florida] *Herald* about the same time.

But wait, there's more: Tribune Media syndicates a strip called *Gangsta Yoga with DJ Dog*, which appears in newspapers all over the nation from the *Detroit Free Press* to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Then there's YOGA TO RELAX SEX WORKERS! from the *Hindustan Times*; and the revelation from Fort Worth, Texas, that yoga is replacing kickball in the city's high school gym classes. Still not convinced? How about yoga skin care, Christian yoga, iPod yoga, golf yoga, tennis yoga . . . well, you get the picture.

Down the hall in marketing, this kind of press is the stuff of dreams. Yoga has now ascended to the category of "platform agnostic," the highest praise marketers can conjure for any kind of content, trend, or person. Translation? Consumers drop \$3 billion every year on yoga classes, books, videos, CDs, DVDs, mats, clothing, and other necessities.

But that's all surface noise. What's more interesting to consider is how yoga arrived at its present bulletproof status in the media. After all, it's foreign-born, liberal by association, and inclusive to its philosophical marrow. Yoga not only survived its 1960s revival, but has somehow managed to embed itself in the great mall of the mainstream — and not like a rusty old peace sign, either, but as a replicating strand of our national DNA. (Memo to Lou Dobbs: Relax! We're exporting American-style Bikram yoga franchises all over the world.) And I'll venture that it says something good about our character as a nation that we've managed to get over our fears of *otherness* to master a few words of Sanskrit, yoga's original language. Yoga means yoke, as in union, shorthand for the theory and practice of forging a link to the divine. And *batha* yoga — physical yoga, with or without a spiritual attachment — is what reporters talk about when they talk about yoga in the twenty-first century.

The scent of patchouli has left the room; yoga now smells like money. We knew it had arrived when it assembled its own constellation of superstar circuit riders like Rodney Yee and Cyndi Lee, teachers who have become as famous to the yogaratti as rap stars are to kids. And yoga classes are even provided by corporations and covered by some health plans, for good reasons: nearly every day, news of another study reaches us, confirming yoga's benefits for arthritics, asthmatics, dyspeptics, depressives, people with HIV or cancer — literally whatever ails us. I bet that even red-meat culture warriors like Bill O'Reilly or Ann Coulter couldn't Swift-boat yoga's progress now. That ship has sailed.

But yoga's American dream is of a fairly recent vintage, as I discovered during a few years of research into its media past. In a journey through two centuries of our cultural history, yoga has endured something of a bumpy ride. It has been feared, loathed, mocked, kicked to the fringes of society, associated with sexual promiscuity, criminal fraud, and runaway immigration. Really. Which make its recent media beatification all the more surprising, as we'll learn. But first, a thumbnail history.

Yoga arrived in the United States in a cloud of ideas both sacred and profane from what was called the Orient: the vast, exotic, unknowable *out there*. In 1805, William Emerson, father of Ralph Waldo Emerson, published the first Sanskrit scripture translation in the U.S. His son Ralph and his Transcendentalist posse, especially Henry David Thoreau, were dazzled by Indian spiritual texts, especially the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which Emerson read in translation for the first time in 1843. "It was as if an empire spake to us," he wrote in his journal, "nothing small or

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unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence."

Thoreau kept a well-thumbed copy of the *Gita* in his cabin at Walden Pond, and claimed wistfully that "at rare intervals, even I am a yogi." The Concord intellectuals, earnest, brilliant men and women all, were destined to remain wannabees, however. Yoga is not about texts. It is *experiential*, its wisdom transmitted skin to skin, teacher to student, which required actual masters (gurus), all of whom happened to be Indians, who were in quite short supply for most of this nation's history. It wasn't until 1883 that the first Hindu cleric lectured in the parlor of Emerson's widow in Concord and went on to complete a short speaking tour. Five years later, an itinerant Tantric yogi named Sylvais Hamati befriended a curious thirteen-year-old Iowan named Perry Baker in Lincoln, Nebraska. Baker, after more than a decade of study at Hamati's feet — and a glamorous Francophile name change — recreated himself as the first American yogi, Pierre Arnold Bernard. Like Huck and Jim, Hamati and Bernard hit the road and remained a team for the next fifteen years.

Throughout those post-Civil War decades, the media's take on yoga was dictated by the Theosophical Society, an influential spiritualist-reform group founded in New York City in 1875. The Theosophists embraced a

combo platter of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs and spiced it with a few of their own. Americans first heard such terms as karma and nirvana through the efforts of the Theosophists, who were awed by the belief that certain yogis had demonstrated occult, Faustian powers over time and space, "over men and natural phenomena," as *The New York Times* put it in 1889. Astral projection, telekinesis, clairvoyance, speaking to the dead and hearing them talk back — it was heady stuff.

For a group founded on brotherhood and spiritual unity, the Theosophists were a cranky bunch, regularly bickering and splintering into factions. They also split the public's perception of yoga into two parts: *raja* good, *batha* bad and even immoral. Half of those *batha* holy men in India sitting like catatonics on beds of nails were fakers, they said, and even Mark Twain dissed these ascetics as "performers" who took money from the poorest of families. The Theosophical Society made plenty of headlines in its time and was in fact a darling of the press. Its stormy meetings were covered like sporting events, like this one from September 1909, which the *Chicago Tribune* reported on for three days straight:

Efforts were made to hush up the Yoga rumors and these were successful until the announcement that a new series of lectures was to be delivered here next week. Then the smoldering Yoga scandal broke into



**"If it weren't
for those two
reporters from
The Post, I fear
the Republic
might have
been lost."**

— SELDEN RING

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a blaze again, various women of considerable social rank were accused by others with being "Yogaists," and the report became current that the cult was to be taken up here again.

Partly through the influence of the Theosophists, a growing number of Indian holy men and yogis were here, plying the byways of turn-of-the-century America. The trend started at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, when the World Parliament of Religions brought together representatives from all the major faiths, including several Hindu sects, and launched America's first superstar swami: the charismatic Vivekananda (which roughly translates to Blissmaster). The American press dubbed him the Cyclonic Monk for his energetic speaking style, and a lecture bureau took note and signed him up.

More swamis followed in Vivekananda's path, more Americans saw the light, and that was more or less when yoga's trouble really started. After decades of sketchy, slightly mocking coverage by newspapers and magazines, yoga came under increasingly vicious attacks. What changed, you might wonder? The immigrants arrived — nearly twelve million of them between 1870 and 1900, piling up in the port cities of both coasts until the surge peaked in the decade between 1900 and 1910, when some one million immigrants entered the U.S. each year and ran into an angry, Nativist backlash.

On the West Coast a growing xenophobia, first aimed at Chinese and Japanese laborers, slowly turned toward "East Indians." Starting in the 1880s, a series of laws, the Oriental Exclusion Acts, was passed to control immigration. In San Francisco, the proudly racist Asiatic Exclusion League, which in the past had campaigned against the "yellow peril" from China,

Yoga has been feared, loathed, mocked, kicked to the fringes of society, associated with sexual promiscuity, criminal fraud, and runaway immigration. Really.

Japan, and Korea, now turned its attention to immigrants from India. By 1906 all Asian Indians were denied U.S. citizenship; in 1917 the Asiatic Barred Zone Act excluded all immigration from South or Southeast Asia, including India. It wasn't repealed until 1965.

At the same time, a spiritual American reform movement was nearing the height of its success in a campaign to "purify" the nation's morals through legislation. You can read the tea leaves here, I think: fear



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of foreigners plus a purity panic (brought to a boil by the sensational "yellow press") set loose the idea that these dark-skinned foreigners and the morals-loosening effects of their "yogi philosophy" were a menace to society. Groups of followers were from then on routinely described as "cults." In the spring of 1911, newspaper readers from coast to coast read about the humiliation of Mr. Winthrop Ellsworth Stone, the president of Purdue University, whose wife fell under the yoga spell and left him and her children. It was noted that a few years before, Mrs. Stone took yoga classes, which were seen as a "fad with several highly educated persons" in the community.

What was shaping up to be the American media's war on yoga now picked up momentum, fueled by the growing "white slave" hysteria (They are stealing our daughters!). In June 1910, the same month Congress unanimously passed the Mann Act, known as the White Slavery Act, the American yogi Pierre Bernard was jailed for abducting two young women in New York City; a week of sensational press coverage ensued in which he was forever branded as the Omnipotent Oom, the Guru of the Loving Tantriks. Here's one of fifty headlines from that week, from William Randolph Hearst's *New York American*:

POLICE BREAK IN ON WEIRD HINDU RITES
GIRLS AND MEN MYSTICS CEASE STRANGE DANCE
AS "PRIEST" IS ARRESTED

To the American consumer of news, yoga was no longer just a queer pastime; it was evil, a con, a *cult* — uncivilized, heathen, and anti-American. Even the word became a metonym for secret doorways and sex worship; yogis were nothing more than swindlers and seducers. From 1911 to 1915, a grifter known to headline writers as "Yogi Bill Ellis" plied his trade in New York and New Jersey. He was arrested in 1915 carrying an array of knock-out drops hidden in false-bottom trunks and a black book containing personal dirt on society dames — to be used for guaranteed results during Yogi Bill's palm-reading sessions.

In the autumn of 1911, the slimiest — but in retrospect the most entertaining — of these attacks was published by the *Los Angeles Times*. A HINDU APPLE FOR MODERN EVE: THE CULT OF THE YOGIS LURES WOMEN TO DESTRUCTION, the headline read. "The incense of sandalwood burned in their honor all the way from the Lake Shore Drive to Fifth Avenue and the Back Bay," the article said. "These dusky-hued Orientals sat on drawing-room sofas, the center of admiring attention, while fair hands passed them cakes and served them tea in Sèvres china." Toward the end of the year, *Current Literature* published a version of a recent piece titled "The Heathen Invasion of America," which concluded: "Literally, yoga means the 'path' that leads to wisdom. Actually 'it is proving the way that leads to domestic infelicity, and insanity and death.'"

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The federal government was apparently prodded into action by such press reports. "Agents are now quietly at work, investigating the strange spread of these Oriental religions throughout this country," *The Washington Post* reported in early 1912. The article listed a roster of female converts and their tragic ends: Miss Sarah Farnum "gave her entire fortune" for a Hindu summer school. Miss Aloise Reuss, of Chicago, now lives in the Illinois Insane Asylum; Miss Ellis Shaw of Lowell, Massachusetts, had to be legally restrained from giving her fortune to a holy man; Mrs. May Wright Sewell, of Indianapolis, Indiana, was made "dangerously ill" by the teachings of her yogi.

What was shaping up to be the American media's war on yoga now picked up momentum, fueled by the 'white slave' hysteria (They are stealing our daughters!)

During the years of the immigration backlash and the morality panic, even into World War I, government agencies enlisted private individuals to go undercover, and journalists did their part. Hearst's *New York American*, which had been tyrannizing Bernard (a.k.a. the Great Oom) and his yoga followers since 1910, began a new campaign in 1918 to dig up actionable dirt. After a few months, the paper turned over its findings to the New York district attorney's office in return for exclusive access to the bust. "Means were obtained for detectives to obtain evidence, and secure entrée to the initiates," the paper bragged. The *American* ran a page-one story that rambled on for 130 column inches, proudly proclaiming its role in hunting down Bernard's yoga cult: "District Attorney Edward A. Swann, acting upon information supplied by the New York American, started a new drive to purify New York," the story began. "The disciples of the cult, whose practices continue all night, include both men and women." The headline was a classic:

TWELVE CULT WORSHIPPERS TAKEN IN A RAID UPON HOME OF THE GREAT OOM

In the 1920s, when tabloids became part of the journalistic landscape, yoga became part of the tabs' new "love cult" obsession. Reporters found love cults in Mexico and France (RICH WORSHIP LOVE GODDESS ALONG RIVIERA); in Queens, New York (HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS ON GRILL); San Francisco (ORGIES OF SUPER-LOVE CULT SEND FIVE TO JAIL). Hearst's *New York Journal* gave the tabs a run for their money with double-truck takeouts like this: LATEST BLACK MAGIC REVELATIONS ABOUT NEFARIOUS AMERICAN LOVE CULTS, which included Bernard, who had combined yoga with baseball, vaudeville, and circuses in Nyack, in the process convincing members of the Vanderbilt family to bankroll his efforts.

By then, America's second most famous swami, a young Calcutta mystic who went by the name Yogananda, had arrived in the U.S. (His *Autobiography of a Yogi*, published in 1946, is still in print.) Yogananda quickly built an American following for his "Yogoda" brand of meditation-based yoga through relentless touring and speaking. "You Americans exercise your bodies and brains too much and your will power too little," he admonished, throwing himself from lotus position to a handstand in one motion. His followers purchased a hilltop retreat for his ashram outside Los Angeles that later became the Self-Realization Fellowship. Yogananda bought himself a new Packard to tool around in and posed proudly next to it for a photo the *Los Angeles Times* captioned with a wink: SWAMI BUYS SWANKY AUTOMOBILE.

But even this holy man came in for his fair share of abuse. He was hauled into court on charges of property fraud in Los Angeles and vague-

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THE RACE BEAT

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ly threatened with immigration proceedings. He was run out of Miami by two hundred angry husbands, as one newspaper reported in 1928. "His life threatened by a delegation of indignant citizens, Swami Yogananda, East Indian love cult leader, was at a hotel tonight determined to stay in Miami 'and fight it out,' despite Police Chief N. Leslie Quiggs's order that he leave town immediately."

In the thirties and forties, a truce settled on the land. The cult connection still hung on for headline writers, and crimes were still attributed to immoral yogis, but a softening could be felt in the media's stance. With Bernard and his yoga-and-baseball ashram prospering on the East Coast and Yogananda's yoga-of-the-will thriving on the West (and the Vedanta Centers preaching a polite theology of Hinduism in between), a kind of amused toleration began to invade newsrooms. Yoga no longer qualified as a novelty; it wasn't going away, but it wasn't stealing our women, either, and it appealed mostly to rubber-legged, brown-rice-and-green-tea types. Joseph Mitchell of the *New York World-Telegram* went to Nyack to see for himself in 1931 and judged Bernard to be all right. "There's nothing high-brow about me, my boy," Bernard told the young reporter. "I'm a curious combination of the business man and the religious scholar. . . a man of common sense in love with beauty."

The thirties saw the rise of the influence of gossip columnists, many of whom had started their careers just a few years earlier with the tabloids. Walter Winchell and Hedda Hopper were two of the best known of the pack. Gossips wrote six days a week in many cases, so they relied to an inordinate degree on movie stars' predilections, which began to involve yoga. In 1938, Cole Porter was back in the hospital, a year after his legs were crushed in a riding accident. He was studying yoga, reported Leonard Lyons in *The Washington Post*, "to attain complete control of his system." Lyons had previously outed Greta Garbo as a lonely yogini; Maureen O'Sullivan was mentioned by the beauty columnist Ida Jean Kain in one of her "Your Figure, Madame," columns titled YOGA EXERCISES FINDING FAVOR WITH WOMEN IN AMERICA. And guess what? Mae West was one of those women, according to Sheila Graham in her "Hollywood Today" column of January 30, 1940.

During the war years, Southern California became the undisputed locus of alternative culture, and Hollywood its epicenter. Yoga was by this time, if not totally American, then a harmless pastime for the citizens of Cali. During World War II, it was reported that "nerves are unpatriotic," according to the author and actress Cornelia Otis Skinner, who told a health columnist

that she had tried yoga and calisthenics to cure her wartime nervousness.

In 1943, it was revealed that Margaret Woodrow Wilson, the former president's daughter, had spent the previous four years studying yoga at an ashram in Pondicherry, India, and had no interest in returning to the U.S. In India, Gandhi received yoga treatments that involved kelp.

In the 1940s, the first homegrown celebrity yogi since Pierre Bernard turned out to be his nephew Theos Bernard, a lawyer and graduate student who completed his master's thesis, "Introduction to Tantrik Ritual," at Columbia University in 1936. Theos traveled to India to study yoga and made his way to Tibet; he arrived at Lhasa on an auspicious day, and so was welcomed and venerated as the first White Lama. His account of his initiation into secret Buddhist rites, *Penthouse of the Gods*, was published by Scribner's in 1939. Theos, with his matinee-idol looks and eager-to-please disposition, was an instant success on the lecture circuit. Meanwhile, his uncle was making headlines again in Nyack by running a training camp for the heavyweight boxer Lou Nova using yoga, equipping him with what sports writers called the "Cosmic Punch." (Nova beat Max Baer but lost to Joe Louis.) By 1944, Theos Bernard had married a wealthy opera star and settled in his own mountaintop ashram in California, built with his wife's money. With her money, too, he published *Hatha Yoga: the Report of a Personal Experience*, including pictures of himself demonstrating a dozen or so asanas wearing only a loincloth. In 1947, on a return trip to Tibet, he was apparently caught up in sectarian crossfire and killed, his body never found.

For yoga, the fifties, as you might expect, were a decade of denial and paranoia. IT WASN'T YOGA, MRS. FDR SAYS, announced the headline in the *Chicago Defender*. Eleanor Roosevelt, responding to a written report that she practiced yoga in the White House, admitted that although she liked to do headstands, "I did not know they were called yoga exercises." Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India, obviously prompted by cold-war worries, denied reports that his nation would supply the Soviet Union with yogis to help cosmonauts breathe easier in outer space.

But in the fifties, in Hartford, Connecticut, of all places (on the wrong coast), there arose the unsung hero of the yoga revolution, a political correspondent and columnist for the *Hartford Courant* named Jack Zaiman. Nobody has yet given JZ the credit he deserves. Zaiman, a gym rat by his own lights, looked from his photograph to be as profound a *square* as can be imagined (he did write the intro for Joe Lieber-



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man's history of Connecticut politics in 1981). But as early as 1953, Zaiman put his credibility on the line by proclaiming: "I Am a Yoga." Never mind the weird syntax, let us here and now give props to Jack, who went on to write a goodly number of columns extolling the virtues of yoga for the next ten years. "Now don't laugh," he began in 1955, "it may sound like a gag but it's not. I think the most important book in my library is a small volume on Yoga written by a woman named Indra Devi."

It was no gag. Jack Zaiman took his book to the Y to practice headstands, and conscious of it or not, started the next great leap forward in the advance of yoga in America. In the mid-fifties, everyday people spontaneously assembled in meeting rooms and gyms at the YWCAs and YMCAs to give yoga a try. Why not? We already tried Latin Dancing. The classes spread in "inkblot" fashion (to steal a metaphor from the Iraq war) from neighborhood to neighborhood, from Inglewood to Westwood in L.A., and from Oak Park to LaGrange in Chicago. "Marilyn Monroe's latest kick is yogi [sic]," wrote Walter Winchell in 1956; not the philosophy, just the exercises. "To improve her legs, she says." Holy cow! Marilyn, too? There was still a "Ripley's Believe It or Not!" approach to yoga among journalists, not just in the celeb stuff but in reporting, like the tale about a visiting yogi who drank acid, chewed on broken glass, and told reporters that if practiced long

enough, yoga could protect humanity from a nuclear attack. YOGA BEST A-BOMB CONTROL AFTER 12 YEARS, SAYS YOGI, was the headline in the *Hartford Courant*. There was the "Fasting Fakir" in the *Chicago Tribune*, the Buried Swami, the indignant parade of the Nude Hindus, and remnants of the crime connection (SELF-STYLED YOGI BOUND OVER ON 10 THEFT CHARGES — *Los Angeles Times*), but by the decade's end, the tide had turned; only loonies now considered yoga to be dangerous anymore. Heck, even Gary Cooper practiced yoga to relax.

Let the sun shine in! The 1960s began with Frances P. Bolton, a seventy-four-year-old congresswoman from Ohio, telling a radio interviewer that she loved yoga and that she learned it back in the 1920s. United Press International picked up the story and put it out on the wires. Bolton was unafraid to be seen as weird, and she was a Republican, too. Take that, Eleanor. In 1961, the *Los Angeles Times* began a landmark multipart series called "What's Yoga," and Richard Hittleman's *Yoga For Health* TV show replaced *Jack LaLanne* in some markets. In Los Angeles it aired every morning, though it took until 1966 to get to New York. Hittleman wrote a series of books that sold eight million copies, and he hung with such credentialed hipsters as Alan Watts and Jack Kerouac.

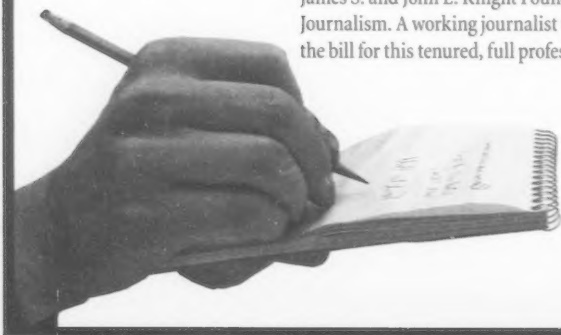
By mid-decade, *The New York Times* estimated

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that yoga practitioners numbered between 20,000 and 100,000. Then in 1967, The Beatles crossed paths with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who was preaching a brand of meditation-based yoga that he trademarked as Transcendental Meditation. BEATLE SAYS THEY'VE GIVEN UP DRUGS was the headline in *The Washington Post* coverage that summer (that was

In the mid-fifties, everyday people spontaneously assembled in meeting rooms and gyms to give yoga a try. Why not? We already tried Latin Dancing.

Paul talking, though their sobriety was extremely temporary, as it turned out). The Beatles made plans to go to India, and the American counterculture lit some incense and followed in spirit. We went mad for yoga — well, for all things Eastern. Mia Farrow, Mick Jagger, Marianne Faithful, Donovan, and others trailed The Beatles to India to spend a few months deepening their study.

It's ironic then to realize just how brief The Beatles' interaction with their guru was. They met in the late

summer of 1967 and by April 1968, the boys were given failing grades by the Maharishi, though "they had done extremely well in meditation," he said. He wouldn't allow them to represent TM or him. They were through with him, too, pissed off at his pushy organization, and used their failed affair with him as material for several great songs: "Dear Prudence," written for Mia Farrow's sister during the ashram stay, and "Sexy Sadie," about the guru himself.

Much has been assumed about The Beatles' influence on the growth of yoga, but I think in the end, it may be a bit overblown. Yoga was firmly rooted not only in the United States but around the world years before The Beatles went to India. In 1966, Rudolf Hess, the lone surviving Nazi in Spandau Prison, who was serving a life sentence for crimes against humanity, told a reporter that "his chief occupation now is practicing yoga on his cell floor." As the decade closed, India was looking into the Maharishi's finances, and he had declared his mission to the West a failure.

In the 1970s and '80s, yoga experienced slower growth, part of a natural backlash against all things hippie and a concomitant leveling off of media interest. In fact, it kind of disappeared during the Jane Fonda years, the Time of the Burn, for those who remember. Fitness freaks wanted heart-thumping aerobics, marathons, Iron Man decathlons; anything but downward dog.

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Fast-forward to 1993. Open your morning *New York Times* to page C-1. Sure enough, there is Sarah Kass introducing you, dear reader, to yoga as if it's a brand new health fad. YOGA, A SIXTIES SURVIVOR, IS LURING NEW CONVERTS read the commanding headline of the paper of record. Kass found a raft of new converts, many of them young. "It's not that yoga hasn't been there all this time," declared Mata Ezraty, director of Yoga Works in Santa Monica, California, "but it's like it's just been discovered." An editor at *Yoga Journal*, the Berkeley, California, bible of the yoga industry, noted that there had been a surge in attendance in classes and that the magazine's circulation had "more than doubled in six years, to 70,000."

Today, *Yoga Journal* is still the leading publication for yoga professionals, and it has branched off into the lucrative area of conferences and retreats. Its editorial director, Kathryn Arnold, has presided over a tripling of the magazine's circulation while its advertising revenues have quadrupled since her watch started in 1998. *YJ*, as it calls itself, is now up to 300,000 subscribers, and Arnold attributes the rise to a singular event. "The defining moment when the medical community started taking notice of yoga occurred in 1990," Arnold told the *Los Angeles Times*; that year *The Lancet* published the results of the California physician Dean Ornish's research indicating that

lifestyle changes — including yoga-based stress management — could reverse heart disease. From then on it was onward and upward.

It's also probably not an accident that the front-runners of the baby-boom generation were lurching through their fifties at the time. Last year, with this group poised to turn sixty, *Yoga Journal* underwrote an expensive study that found — to the relief of *YJ*'s marketing team — that about sixteen million Americans were practicing yoga regularly. It makes perfect sense. What better exercise to facilitate a low-impact glide to the golden years . . . with or without spiritual attachments? There are some seventy-eight million baby boomers living and breathing and getting older. In fact, every day, another 7,920 of them turn sixty. If I were a betting man, I would lay odds that yoga is not about to disappear again for a long time to come.

In fact, the only question worth a wager now is when publishing's big dogs — Condé Nast, Hearst, and Rodale, perhaps the New York Times Company — jump in and launch competitive ventures to get on the mat with this free-spending cohort. It's 2006, after all, and there's no longer any fear of yoga, only a lingering suspicion that a competitor somewhere may be getting a leg up. ■

Contributing editor Robert Love wrote about the Page Six scandal and the history of blackmail in journalism in the July/August CJR.

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IDEAS & REVIEWS

BOOKS



THE DESEGREGATION DRAMA

THE WHITE NEWS MEDIA CAME LATE TO THE SCENE. BUT WHEN THEY FINALLY DID ARRIVE, THE BATTLE WAS JOINED.

BY DAVID K. SHIPLER

It is impossible to read a history of press coverage of the civil rights movement without reflecting darkly on today's era of secret surveillance, clandestine prisons, and prosecutorial threats against newspapers that expose government misdeeds. As the struggle in the South illustrated, only when reporters throw spotlights on the ugliest behavior does the conscience of the country begin to stir. Only when the press is relentless at portraying awful truths, even in the face of danger, will that conscience mobilize for change. That's how it works in an open political system that owes its allegiance to an informed people. The authors of the First Amendment sure had it right.

Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff draw no parallel between then and now, but every gracefully written page of *The Race Beat* prompts big thoughts about the nature of America. With each gripping story of racial confrontation, every meticulous reconstruction of the perverse misuse of law, every account of vile acts committed by the segregationist press and coura-

geous efforts by a few white southern editors, this probing book reverberates with large lessons in democracy and justice.

Roberts and Klibanoff begin with Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish economist and parliamentarian, who recognized in the early 1940s, as he completed researching *An American Dilemma*, that "a great many Northerners, perhaps the majority, get shocked and shaken in their conscience when they learn the facts." He put his conclusion in italics for emphasis: "*To get publicity is of the highest strategic importance to the Negro people.*"

But major American news organizations did not examine racial issues until racially charged violence erupted in the South. "The press, other than black newspapers and a handful of liberal southern editors, simply didn't recognize racism in America as a story," the authors

write. Like the society, coverage was segregated. "The mainstream American press wrote about whites but seldom about Negro Americans or discrimination against them; that was left to the Negro press." As late as 1956, two years after the Supreme Court ordered school desegregation in *Brown v. Board of Education*, *The New York Times* misreported on the South in an eight-page, 50,000-word pullout section that found moderate progress toward integration and "failed to note that the region was about to explode," the book declares. As for southern newspapers, "For the most part, they treated Negro communities as a creepy corner of the world not worthy of their readers' time."

Therefore, black-owned papers had the story practically all to themselves at first, and their reporters — notably Vincent Tubbs, hired in 1941 as the "lynch reporter" for the *Baltimore Afro-American* — traveled remote and dangerous roads. "White journalists could drive themselves into town and not draw suspicion," the authors write. "Not Negro re-

THE RACE BEAT: THE PRESS, THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE, AND THE AWAKENING OF A NATION
by Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff
Alfred A. Knopf. 518 pp. \$30

GLAUCO DELLA SCUCCA

porters. Tubbs would have to get off the bus one town earlier than his destination, stash his city duds, throw on some local garb, muss himself up to blend with the local scenery, and hitchhike, Old Black Joe-like, to where the lynching had taken place. He'd hope to get in a couple of days of reporting, then

of ten Freedom Riders integrating a bus from Nashville.

He watched a threatening mob of whites surround the bus after it pulled into Birmingham. Yet "Lewis felt relatively safe," the authors write, "as long as he could look out the window and see reporters and photographers at the bus station

This time, Connor put the riders under "protective custody," locked them in the Birmingham jail, and just before midnight drove them in three unmarked station wagons and dumped them at the Tennessee state line. It could have been worse, and it became so. Making their way back to Alabama, they eventually continued their ride to Mississippi, where they were again arrested and after two weeks sent "to the notorious Parchman State Penitentiary, the 22,000-acre prison farm in the Delta, where terror, degradation, and mystery filled the night," the authors report. "'Ain't no newspapermen out here,' one guard chuckled smugly to the inmates. 'Something could happen to me,' Lewis found himself thinking, 'and nobody is going to know.' He was experiencing his greatest fear."

Segregation flourished in that shadow of fear. Surprisingly, though, when the press turned vicious practices into the sunlight, very few segregationists were de-

Editors on both sides stepped beyond their proper roles into the thicket of policymaking

slip out of town." Sadly, white editors weren't reading black newspapers.

By the height of the civil rights movement twenty years later, the black press had been marginalized by white officials who excluded black reporters from courtrooms, campuses, and other key sites. And the white-owned national press had become so central in the run of events that its absence could bring a terrifying chill, as John Lewis, now a Georgia congressman, realized in 1961 when he led a group

and as long as they could see him. That sense of security quickly evaporated when police officers began taping cardboard and newspapers over all the bus's windows." A few days earlier, Birmingham's infamous police chief, Bull Connor, had given Klansmen an uninterrupted fifteen minutes to beat another group of Freedom Riders with pipes, bicycle chains, blackjacks, and steel knuckles. "He doesn't want the press to see inside the bus," Lewis thought. 'He wants to hide what is happening.'"

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tered. Within full view of the cameras, white gangs and brutish cops usually played their villainous roles perfectly in a pageant of state-sanctioned violence against nonviolent demonstrators. So, civil rights leaders began picking demonstration sites where white police officials and mobs were likely to retaliate dramatically with clubs, chains, dogs, and fire hoses, Roberts and Klibanoff note, producing pictures to illustrate the hatred and galvanize the nation. The clashes propelled the reports onto front pages and television broadcasts, but it's not clear from the book's analysis how often the coverage searched beyond the bloodshed into the quiet, corrosive effects of Jim Crow, or into the movement's strategies and goals.

Only a few ardent segregationists were canny enough to understand that a lack of violence could make a story fizzle. Laurie Pritchett, the cigar-chomping police chief of Albany, Georgia, "ordered his police to be as nonviolent as the protesters

and to squash any efforts at violence by white bystanders," the authors write, and he made mass arrests peaceably. He also tapped phones and "took tips from a rental car agent at the airport when journalists or federal agents arrived in town." He even had informants among the press.

Elsewhere, however, segregationists infuriated by the coverage were more direct, attacking newsmen both in the streets and in the courts. White thugs bludgeoned reporters and photographers so frequently that few prominent journalists were left unscathed; Paul Guihard of Agence France Press was shot to death during riots as Ole Miss was integrated. By 1964, officials in three states had filed at least seventeen libel suits against news organizations, prompting *New York Times* lawyers to keep the paper's reporters out of Alabama during most of two and a half years, lest they be detained. This damaged the paper's coverage, although in the end, of course,

the major case — *New York Times Company v. Sullivan* — became a landmark for press freedom.

Gene Roberts, whom I knew slightly years ago, covered the civil rights movement for southern papers and the *Times*, where he became both national and managing editor. He made his biggest mark as executive editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, whose staff won seventeen Pulitzers during his tenure. Klibanoff is managing editor of news at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and together they emerge as fluent story-tellers, weaving biographical background into the rapid run of their narrative, drawing sharp vignettes of complicated men struggling through moments high with drama. As a northerner, I've always had a bias in favor of liberal white southerners telling this momentous story, and this book proves the point.

Roberts is one of the country's most respected journalists, and he has said elsewhere that his professional values were affected by the

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southern white editors who took great risks to fill a leadership vacuum and preach moderation, tolerance, and obedience to federal law. They included Harry Ashmore of the *Charlotte News* and the *Arkansas Gazette*, Ralph McGill of the *Atlanta Constitution*, Hodding Carter Jr. of the *Delta Democrat-Times* in Mississippi, Buford Boone of the *Tuscaloosa News*, Eugene Patterson of the *Atlanta Constitution*, and Lenoir Chambers of the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, all of whom won Pulitzers for editorial writing.

They stood in stark relief against their segregationist colleagues who distorted the news and fanned the fires. *The Advertiser* of Montgomery, Alabama, downplayed the city bus boycott's effectiveness so that only "in the twentieth paragraph out of 47, readers learned that 90 percent of the Negro riders had refused to ride," the authors report. In its "complicity, indifference, or laziness," the *Advertiser* also published a hoax — a phony story planted by segregationists that the boycott had ended.

Mississippi's most influential television station, WLBT, gave free time to the segregationist Citizens' Council and space in the lobby for a bookstore displaying white supremacist literature. Its manager, Fred Beard, "reviewed, edited, censored, and sometimes added editorial comment to national broadcasts coming into the station, shaping them to his Citizens' Council point of view."

After the 1963 March on Washington, where Martin Luther King declared, "I have a dream" and moved the nation, the *Clarion-Ledger* in Jackson put on its cover a photograph showing the litter left behind and the headline **WASHINGTON IS CLEAN AGAIN WITH NEGRO TRASH REMOVED**.

In Philadelphia, Mississippi, *The Nesboba Democrat* invited vigilantism, stating: "Outsiders who come in here and try to stir up trouble should be dealt with in a manner they won't forget."

Roberts and Klibanoff inter-

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Dennis F. Giza, Deputy Publisher, 10/01/06

viewed, sifted through clips, and mined memoirs and personal letters. They are never simplistic; their portraits are spare but revealing, their subjects often complex, evolving painfully. James J. Kilpatrick, the intellectual, crude, pugnacious editor of the *Richmond News Leader*, promoted the legal strategy of "interposition," whereby states placed themselves between their people and a federal government that was trying to impose "mongrelization of our society." Virginia followed his advice, enacting laws that automatically closed down schools when federal courts ordered them integrated. But later Kilpatrick expressed shame after seeing a sit-in by "colored students in coats, white shirts, ties" juxtaposed against the "gang of white boys come to heckle, a ragtail rabble, slackjawed, black-jacketed, grinning fit to kill, and some of them, God save the mark, were waving the proud and honored flag of the Southern States."

Words had impact. Mississippi

suffered violence in part because its newspapers stirred the pot of hatred. Georgia desegregated its university peacefully thanks in part to McGill, the *Atlanta Constitution* editor. Ashmore defused some resistance by assembling a consortium of editors who created the *Southern School News*, a straight, factual monthly newspaper reporting reactions by school districts to desegregation orders.

Editors on both sides often stepped beyond their proper roles into the thicket of policymaking. Boone, of *The Tuscaloosa News*, held meetings with business leaders on maintaining calm when the university was integrated. Patterson, of the *Constitution*, wrote a speech delivered by Lady Bird Johnson at a 1964 campaign stop in Georgia. *The Washington Post's* publisher, Philip Graham, arranged for a phone call in which Ashmore appealed to deputy attorney general William Rogers to urge intervention by President Eisenhower to quell the violence in Little Rock.

North Carolina editors, coordinating with school boards that were planning peaceful desegregation, kept the news from their own reporters to avoid giving segregationists a chance to mount resistance.

When four little girls were killed in the church bombing in Birmingham, Patterson eloquently spread the blame. "Only we can trace the truth, Southerner — you and I. We broke those children's bodies. We watched the stage set without staying it. We listened to the prologue unbestirred . . . We — who go on electing politicians who heat the kettles of hate . . . This is no time to load our anguish onto the murderous scapegoat who set the cap in dynamite of our own manufacture . . . He thinks he has pleased us."

Who is writing that way now, as our government tapes cardboard and newspapers over the windows? ■

David K. Shipler, a former New York Times correspondent, is the author of A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America.

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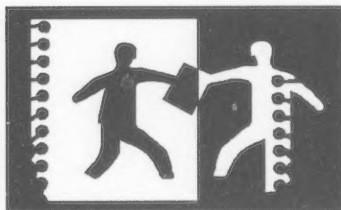
THE RESEARCH REPORT

BY MICHAEL SCHUDSON
AND TONY DOKOUPIL

INSIDE JOKES

After White House-bound Bill Clinton donned shades and played the sax on *The Arsenio Hall Show* in June 1992, a small intellectual industry emerged to examine the relationship between entertainment and politics. Media watchdogs began counting jokes on *Leno* and *Letterman* to make sure Republicans and Democrats were evenly roasted, while campaign managers hurried to book their candidates for "humanizing" interviews on the laugh circuit. Whether any of this mattered to public opinion was unclear, until a Pew Research Center survey published in early 2000 found that young people received more political campaign information from late-night comedy than did older or better-informed people. Youngsters garnered less information from traditional news sources than did any other group. Academics and journalists alike were intrigued and often alarmed at these findings — more so after Pew's 2004 follow-up found still fewer young people citing newspapers and network television as information sources and still more citing late-night comedy. Commentators leapt to the conclusion that young people were abandoning journalism for comedy to get political news.

That's a little hasty, according to a new study by Dannagal Young and Russell Tisinger, doctoral candidates at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication. Reanalyzing the Pew data in the summer issue of the *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, they find that young people who turn to late-night comedy for political information watch more tradi-



In this column, Michael Schudson and Tony Dokoupil will cull current scholarly writing about journalism for fresh ideas that readers of CJR might not otherwise chance upon. Suggestions for possible mention are welcome at theresearchreport@cjr.org.

tional national network news — not less — than peers who abstain from watching late-night comedy. One reason may be that satirical programs such as *The Daily Show* function like editorial cartoons in a newspaper; getting the jokes requires context and prior knowledge. The scholars say their data support two current notions about entertainment and politics: one, that comedy serves as a "gateway" to consumption of traditional news, and two, that "individuals use *diverse* forms of content to create political understanding." Arguments will continue on whether joking about politics is good or bad for us, but at least for now, staying up late is no sign of illness for the body politic.

TRUE COURAGE

"What makes the elephant charge his tusk in the misty mist, or the dusky dusk?" The Cowardly Lion, musing in *The Wizard of Oz*, had one explanation: "Courage!" It's the same quality that underpins exceptional journalism in the twenty-first century, according to the former *Time* magazine essayist Lance Morrow, one of over fifty journalists who reflect on

courage in this summer's *Nieman Reports*. Two-thirds of the accounts come from international correspondents facing physical danger while reporting on war, crime, and repressive regimes. The remaining pages look at domestic journalists taking risks in reporting despite the potential loss of friends, contacts, and income. Courage takes many forms. As the University of Missouri journalism professor Geneva Overholser writes, it includes "the courage to admit mistakes, acknowledge doubts, hold ourselves accountable, make our work transparent."

In the June issue of *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, another Annenberg/Penn graduate student, Matt Carlson, took up the topic of journalistic courage in the tragic cases of the NBC reporter David Bloom and the *Washington Post* columnist Michael Kelly. Looking at both print and TV coverage of their deaths in Iraq in 2003, Carlson finds both men represented as brave witnesses to the war, thereby serving both their country and the highest aspirations of journalism. In representing Kelly, however, the media miscast him in a revealing way — as a reporter rather than a columnist, a neutral "witness" rather than an advocate. They rarely noted (*Good Morning America* and *The Boston Globe* were exceptions) Kelly's outspoken support of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. When journalists discuss journalistic courage, they are most comfortable recognizing it in objective witness, not in the variety of other honest stances journalists legitimately take.

Michael Schudson teaches at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism and in the Department of Communication, University of California, San Diego. Tony Dokoupil is a Ph.D. candidate in communication at Columbia.

IGOR KOPETITSKY

The Lower case

GOP aims to use terrorism to keep control of Hill

The Oakland Tribune 9/3/06

William Riordan, 83, real estate appraiser, veteran



The Baltimore Sun 7/21/06
page 7B

Ronald M. Haddaway, 57, museum security director

Ronald M. Haddaway, 57, museum security director, who earlier Baltimore County



The Baltimore Sun 7/21/06
page 6B

Man asking kids to help find puppy found to be a sex offender

Rutland Herald (Vt.) 9/2/06

Locals Lobby
for Cancer
Back East

Kitsap Sun (Wash.) 9/16/06

Blood pressure
tough to prevent

The Herald Sun (Durham, N.C.) 3/15/06

*Suits Say U.S.
Impeded Audits
For Oil Leases*

The New York Times 9/21/06

Woman frequently cooks rice

The Telegraph (Nashua, N.H.) 8/23/06

On Tuesday night, the commission passed new standards, requiring Level 3 and 4 lab scientists to obtain a permit, hold a public meeting where they release the organisms they will be testing,

(Boston) Metro 9/21/06

In Role Reversal, Ex-F.B.I. Agents
Help Murder Defendant

The New York Times 9/21/06

Atlantic Coast to remain

The Patriot-News (Harrisburg, Pa.) 9/13/06

Barbaro tastes great outdoors

Philadelphia Daily News, 9/13/06



Counter clockwise from top left: A view from aboard the Excellence – the ship Rose Bard was working on when she had her accident; Rose, with the help of physical therapist Bernice Kegel, navigates over a speed bump; Rose gives a kiss to her son, Aries Hylan Laigo.

The triumph of the human spirit is never an everyday story.

Last fall, while working on a fish processing vessel in the Bering Sea, Rose Bard began the battle for her life. Just hours after finding out she was pregnant, Rose was cleaning a fish-mincing machine on the M/V Excellence when someone accidentally turned it on. The machine mangled her legs and trapped her for hours while she awaited a heroic Coast Guard rescue in one of the worst storms of the season.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer told Rose's dramatic story in a week-long serialized presentation. The P-I team of nationally recognized narrative writer Carol Smith and award-winning photographer Dan DeLong showed readers how one woman survived and thrived as a physically challenged mother in Seattle.



Carol Smith, Reporter
Dan DeLong, Photographer

Integrating the Web added an exciting dimension to the series, which ensured readers never missed a day of "A Life in the Balance." Online visitors viewed the photo gallery, listened to audio readings of the story and heard words from Rose. On the fourth day, the series drew the highest readership on seattlepi.com – an achievement far beyond most serials. See the entire series at seattlepi.com/specials/rose

The community responded to the series. Many readers wrote in to thank the P-I for sharing this inspiring story of one woman's perseverance over tragedy. Bringing readers the stories that they never forget is one more way Hearst Newspapers deliver excellence every day.



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